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James Lenox.

THE

WORKS

OF

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D.D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY, AND PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY, OF EDINBURGH,
HISTORIOGRAPHER TO HIS MAJESTY FOR SCOTLAND,
AND
MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF HISTORY AT MADRID.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY DUGALD STEWART, F.R.S. EDIN.

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THE

HISTORY

OF

AMERICA.

VOL. I.

PREFACE.

IN fulfilling the engagement which I had come under to the Public with respect to the History of America, it was my intention not to have published any part of the work until the whole was completed. The present state of the British Colonies has induced me to alter that resolution. While they are engaged in civil war with Great Britain, inquiries and speculations concerning their ancient forms of policy and laws, which exist no longer, cannot be interesting. The attention and expectation of mankind are now turned towards their future condition. In whatever manner this unhappy contest may terminate, a new order of things must arise in North America, and its affairs will assume another aspect. I wait with the solicitude of a good citizen, until the ferment subside, and regular government be re-established,

and then I shall return to this part of my work, in which I had made some progress. That, together with the history of Portuguese America, and of the settlements made by the several nations of Europe in the West-India Islands, will complete my plan.

THE three volumes which I now publish contain an account of the discovery of the New World, and of the progress of the Spanish arms and colonies there. This is not only the most splendid portion of the American story, but so much detached, as, by itself, to form a perfect whole, remarkable for the unity of the subject. As the principles and maxims of the Spaniards in planting colonies, which have been adopted in some measure by every nation, are unfolded in this part of my work; it will serve as a proper introduction to the history of all the European establishments in America, and convey such information concerning this important article of policy, as may be deemed no less interesting than curious.

In describing the achievements and institutions of the Spaniards in the New World, I have departed, in many instances, from the accounts of preceding historians, and have often related facts which seem to have been unknown to them. It is a duty I owe the Public to mention the sources from which I have derived such intelligence as justifies me either in placing transactions in a new light, or in forming any new opinion with respect to their causes and effects. This duty I perform with greater satisfaction, as it will afford an opportunity of expressing my gratitude to those benefactors who have honoured me with their countenance and aid in my researches.

As it was from Spain that I had to expect the most important information, with regard to this part of my work, I considered it as a very fortunate circumstance for me, when Lord Grantham, to whom I had the honour of being personally known, and with whose liberality of sentiment and disposition to oblige, I was well acquainted, was appointed ambas-

sador to the court of Madrid. Upon applying to him, I met with such a reception as satisfied me that his endeavours would be employed in the most proper manner, in order to obtain the gratification of my wishes; and I am perfectly sensible, that what progress I have made in my inquiries among the Spaniards, ought to be ascribed chiefly to their knowing how much His Lordship interested himself in my success.

But did I owe nothing more to Lord Grantham, than the advantages which I have derived from his attention in engaging Mr. Waddilove, the chaplain of his embassy, to take the conduct of my literary inquiries in Spain, the obligations I lie under to him would be very great. During five years that gentleman has carried on researches for my behoof, with such activity, perseverance, and knowledge of the subject, to which his attention was turned, as have filled me with no less astonishment than satisfaction. He procured for me the greater part of the Spanish books, which I have consulted; and

as many of them were printed early in the sixteenth century, and are become extremely rare, the collecting of these was such an occupation as alone required much time and assiduity. To his friendly attention I am indebted for copies of several valuable manuscripts, containing facts and details which I might have searched for in vain, in works that have been made public. Encouraged by the inviting good-will with which Mr. Waddilove conferred his favours, I transmitted to him a set of queries, with respect both to the customs and policy of the native Americans, and the nature of several institutions in the Spanish settlements, framed in such a manner, that a Spaniard might answer them, without disclosing any thing that was improper to be communicated to a foreigner. He translated these into Spanish, and obtained from various persons who had resided in most of the Spanish colonies, such replies as have afforded me much instruction.

NOTWITHSTANDING those peculiar advantages with which my inquiries were

carried on in Spain, it is with regret I am obliged to add, that their success must be ascribed to the beneficence of individuals, not to any communication by public authority. By a singular arrangement of Philip II. the records of the Spanish monarchy are deposited in the *Archivo* of Simancas, near Valladolid, at the distance of a hundred and twenty miles from the seat of government, and the supreme courts of justice. The papers relative to America, and chiefly to that early period of its history, towards which my attention was directed, are so numerous, that they alone, according to one account, fill the largest apartment in the Archivo; and, according to another, they compose eight hundred and seventy-three large bundles. Conscious of possessing, in some degree, the industry which belongs to an historian, the prospect of such a treasure excited my most ardent curiosity. But the prospect of it is all that I have enjoyed. Spain, with an excess of caution, has uniformly thrown a veil over her transactions in America. From strangers they are concealed with pecu-

liar solicitude. Even to her own subjects the Archivo of Simancas is not opened without a particular order from the crown; and after obtaining that, papers cannot be copied, without paying fees of office so exorbitant, that the expense exceeds what it would be proper to bestow, when the gratification of literary curiosity is the only object. It is to be hoped, that the Spaniards will at last discover this system of concealment to be no less impolitic than illiberal. From what I have experienced in the course of my inquiries, I am satisfied, that upon a more minute scrutiny into their early operations in the New World, however reprehensible the actions of individuals may appear, the conduct of the nation will be placed in a more favourable light.

In other parts of Europe very different sentiments prevail. Having searched, without success, in Spain, for a letter of Cortes to Charles V. written soon after he landed in the Mexican Empire, which has not hitherto been published; it occurred to

me, that as the Emperor was setting out for Germany at the time when he messengers from Cortes arrived in Europe, the letter with which they were intrusted might possibly be preserved in the Imperial library of Vienna. I communicated this idea to Sir Robert Murray Keith, with whom I have long had the honour to live in friendship, and I had soon the pleasure to learn, that upon his application, Her Imperial Majesty had been graciously pleased to issue an order, that not only a copy of that letter (if it were found), but of any other papers in the library, which could throw light upon the History of America, should be transmitted to me. The letter from Cortes is not in the Imperial library, but an authentic copy, attested by a notary, of the letter written by the magistrates of the colony planted by him at Vera Cruz, which I have mentioned, Vol. ii. p. 288., having been found, it was transcribed, and sent to me. As this letter is no less curious, and as little known, as that which was the object of my inquiries, I have given some account, in its proper place,

of what is most worthy of notice in it. Together with it, I received a copy of a letter from Cortes, containing a long account of his expedition to Honduras, with respect to which I did not think it necessary to enter into any particular detail; and likewise those curious Mexican paintings, which I have described, vol. iii. p. 299.

My inquiries at St. Petersburgh were carried on with equal facility and success. In examining into the nearest communication between our continent and that of America, it became of consequence to obtain authentic information concerning the discoveries of the Russians in their navigation from Kamchatka towards the coast of America. Accurate relations of their first voyage, in 1741, have been published by Muller and Gmelin. Several foreign authors have entertained an opinion, that the court of Russia studiously conceals the progress which has been made by more recent navigators, and suffers the Public to be amused with false accounts of their route. Such con-

duct appeared to me unsuitable to those liberal sentiments, and that patronage of science, for which the present sovereign of Russia is eminent; nor could I discern any political reason, that might render it improper to apply for information concerning the late attempts of the Russians to open a communication between Asia and America. My ingenious countryman, Dr. Rogerson, first physician to the Empress, presented my request to Her Imperial Majesty, who not only disclaimed any idea of concealment, but instantly ordered the journal of Captain Krenitzin, who conducted the only voyage of discovery made by public authority since the year 1741, to be translated, and his original chart to be copied for my use. By consulting them, I have been enabled to give a more accurate view of the progress and extent of the Russian discoveries, than has hitherto been communicated to the Public.

From other quarters I have received information of great utility and importance. M. le Chevalier de Pinto, the

minister from Portugal to the court of Great Britain, who commanded for several years at Matagrosso, a settlement of the Portuguese in the interior part of Brazil, where the Indians are numerous, and their original manners little altered by intercourse with Europeans, was pleased to send me very full answers to some queries concerning the character and institutions of the natives of America, which his polite reception of an application made to him in my name, encouraged me to propose. These satisfied me, that he had contemplated with a discerning attention the curious objects which his situation presented to his view, and I have often followed him as one of my best-instructed guides.

M. Suard, to whose elegant translation of the History of the Reign of Charles V. I owe the favourable reception of that work on the continent, procured me answers to the same queries from M. de Bougainville, who had opportunities of observing the Indians both of North and South America, and from

M. Godin le Jeune, who resided fifteen years among Indians in Quito, and twenty years in Cayenne. The latter are more valuable from having been examined by M. de la Condamine, who, a few weeks before his death, made some short additions to them, which may be considered as the last effort of that attention to science which occupied a long life.

My inquiries were not confined to one region in America. Governor Hutchinson took the trouble of recommending the consideration of my queries to Mr. Hawley and Mr. Brainerd, two protestant missionaries, employed among the Indians of the Five Nations, who favoured me with answers, which discover a considerable knowledge of the people whose customs they describe. From William Smith, Esq. the ingenious historian of New York, I received some useful information. When I enter upon the History of our Colonies in North America, I shall have occasion to acknowledge how much I have been indebted to many other gentlemen of that country.

FROM the valuable Collection of Voyages made by Alexander Dalrymple, Esq., with whose attention to the History of Navigation and Discovery the Public is well acquainted, I have received some very rare books, particularly two large volumes of Memorials, partly manuscript, and partly in print, which were presented to the court of Spain during the reigns of Philip III. and Philip IV. From these I have learned many curious particulars with respect to the interior state of the Spanish colonies, and the various schemes formed for their improvement. As this collection of Memorials formerly belonged to the Colbert Library, I have quoted them by that title.

ALL those books and manuscripts I have consulted with that attention which the respect due from an Author to the Public required; and by minute references to them, I have endeavoured to authenticate whatever I relate. The longer I reflect on the nature of historical

composition, the more I am convinced that this scrupulous accuracy is necessary. The historian who records the events of his own time, is credited in proportion to the opinion which the Public entertains with respect to his means of information and his veracity. He who delineates the transactions of a remote period, has no title to claim assent, unless he produces evidence in proof of his assertions. Without this, he may write an amusing tale, but cannot be said to have composed an authentic history. In those sentiments I have been confirmed by the opinion of an Author*, whom his industry, erudition, and discernment, have deservedly placed in a high rank among the most eminent historians of the age. Imboldened by a hint from him, I have published a catalogue of the Spanish books which I have consulted. This practice was frequent in the last century, and was considered as an evidence of laudable indus-

* Mr. Gibbon.

try in an author; in the present, it may, perhaps, be deemed the effect of ostentation; but, as many of these books are unknown in Great Britain, I could not otherwise have referred to them as authorities, without encumbering the page with an insertion of their full titles. To any person who may choose to follow me in this path of inquiry, the catalogue must be very useful.

My readers will observe, that in mentioning sums of money, I have uniformly followed the Spanish method of computing by *pesos*. In America, the peso *fuerte*, or *duro*, is the only one known; and that is always meant when any sum imported from America is mentioned. The peso fuerte, as well as other coins, has varied in its numerary value; but I have been advised, without attending to such minute variations, to consider it as equal to four shillings and six-pence of our money. It is to be remembered, however, that, in the sixteenth century, the effective value of a peso, *i. e.* the

quantity of labour which it represented, or of goods which it would purchase, was five or six times as much as at present.

N. B. Since this edition was put into the press, a History of Mexico, in two volumes in quarto, translated from the Italian of the Abbé D. Francesco Saverio Clavigero, has been published. From a person who is a native of New Spain, who has resided forty years in that country, and who is acquainted with the Mexican language, it was natural to expect much new information. Upon perusing his work, however, I find that it contains hardly any addition to the ancient History of the Mexican empire, as related by Acosta and Herrera, but what is derived from the improbable narratives and fanciful conjectures of Torquemada and Boturini. Having copied their splendid descriptions of the high state of civilisation in the Mexican empire, M. Clavigero, in the abundance of

his zeal for the honour of his native country, charges me with having mistaken some points, and with having misrepresented others, in the History of it. When an author is conscious of having exerted industry in research, and impartiality in decision, he may, without presumption, claim what praise is due to these qualities, and he cannot be insensible to any accusation that tends to weaken the force of his claim. A feeling of this kind has induced me to examine such strictures of M. Clavigero on my History of America as merited any attention, especially as these are made by one who seemed to possess the means of obtaining accurate information; and to show that the greater part of them is destitute of any just foundation. This I have done in notes upon the passages in my History, which gave rise to his criticisms.

COLLEGE *of* EDINBURGH,
March 1st, 1788.

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CATALOGUE

OF

Spanish Books and Manuscripts.

A

ACARETTE de Biscay, Relation des Voyages dans la Riviere de la Plata, & de là par terre au Perou. Exst. Recueil de Thevenot, Part IV.

———————— A Voyage up the River de la Plata, and thence by land to Peru. 8vo. London, 1698.

Acosta (P. Jos. de) Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias. 4to. Madrid, 1590.

———— (Joseph de) Histoire Naturelle & Morale des Indes tant Orientales qu' Occidentales. 8vo. Paris, 1600.

———— Novi Orbis Historia Naturalis & Moralis. Exst. in Collect. Theod. de Bry, Pars IX.

———— De Natura Novi Orbis, Libri duo, & de procuranda Indorum Salute, Libri sex. Salmant. 8vo. 1589.

———— (Christov.) Tratado de las Drogas y Medecinas de las Indias Occidentales, con sus Plantas Dibuxadas al vivo. 4to. Burgos, 1578.

Acugna (P. Christoph.) Relation de la Riviere des Amazones. 12mo. Tom. ii. Paris, 1682.

Acugna's Relation of the great River of the Amazons in South America. 8vo. London, 1698.

Alarchon (Fern.) Navigatione a Scoprere il Regno di sette Città. Ramusio III. 363.

Albuquerque Coello, (Duarté de,) Memorial de Artes de la Guerre del Brasil. 4to. Mad. 1634.

Alcafarado (Franc.) An Historical Relation of the Discovery of the Isle of Madeira. 4to. Lond. 1675.

Alçedo y Herrera (D. Dionysio de) Aviso Historico-Politico-Geografico, con las Noticias mas particulares, del Peru, Tierre Firmé, Chili, y nuevo Reyno de Granada. 4to. Mad. 1740.

——— Compendi Historico de la Provincia y Puerto de Guayquil. 4to. Mad. 1741.

——— Memorial sobre diferentes Puntos tocantes al estado de la Real hazienda, y del Comercio, &c. en las Indias. fol.

Aldama y Guevara (D. Jos. Augustin de) Arde de la Lengua Mexicana. 12mo. Mexico, 1754.

Alvarado (Pedro de) Dos Relaciones a Hern. Cortes Referiendole sus Expediciones y Conquistas en varias Provincias de N. Espagna. Exst. Barcia Historiad. Primit. tom. 1.

—— Lettre due, &c. Exst. Ramus. III. 296.

Aparicio y Leon (D. Lorenzo de) Discurso Historico-Politico del Hospital San Lazaro de Lima. 8vo. Lim. 1761.

Aranzeles Reales de los Ministros de la Real Audiencia de N. Espagna. fol. Mex. 1727.

Argensola (Bartolome Leonardo de) Conquista de las Islas Malucas. fol. Mad. 1609.

——— Anales de Aragon. fol. Saragoca, 1630.

Arguello (Eman.) Sentum Confessionis. 12mo. Mex. 1703.

Arriago (P. Pablo Jos. de) Extirpacion de la Idolatria de Peru. 4to. Lima. 1621.

Avendagno (Didac.) Thesaurus Indicus, ceu generalis Instructor pro Regimine Conscientiæ, in ijs quæ ad Indias spectant. fol. 2 vols. Antwerp. 1660.

Aznar (D. Bern. Fran.) Discurso tocante a la real hazienda y administracion de ella. 4to.

B

Bandini (Angelo Maria) Vita e Lettere di Amerigo Vespucci. 4to. Firenze, 1745.

Barcia (D. And. Gonzal.) Historiadores Primitivos de las Indias Occidentales. fol. 3 vols. Mad. 1749.

Barco-Centinera (D. Martin de) Argentina y Conquista del Rio de la Plata Poema. Exst. Barcia Historiad. Primit. III.

Barros (Joao de) Decadas de Asia. fol. 4 vols. Lisboa, 1682.

Bellesteros (D. Thomas de) Ordenanzas del Peru. fol. 2 vols. Lima, 1685.

Beltran (P. F. Pedro) Arte de el Idioma Maya reducido a sucintas reglas, y Semilexicon. 4to. Mex. 1746.

Benzo (Hieron.) Novi Orbis Historiæ—De Bry America, Part IV. V. VI.

Betancurt y Figuero (Don Luis) Derecho de las Inglesias Metropolitanas de les Indias. 4to. Mad. 1637.

Blanco (F. Matias Ruiz) Conversion de Piritu de Indios Cumanagotos y otros. 12mo. Mad. 1690.

Boturini Benaduci (Lorenzo) Idea de una nueva Historia general de la America Septentrional, fundada sobre material copiosa de Figuras, Symbolas Caracteres, Canteres, y manuscritos de Autores Indios. 4to. Mad. 1746.

Botello de Moraes y Vasconcellos (D. Francisco de) El Nuevo Mundo Poema Heroyco. 4to. Barcelona, 1701.

Botero Benes (Juan) Description de Todas las Provincias, Reynos, y Ciudades del Mundo. 4to. Girona, 1748.

Brietius (Phil.) Paralela Geographiæ Veteris & Novæ. 4to. Paris, 1648.

C

Cabeza de Baca (Alvar. Nugnez) Relacion de los Naufracios. Exst. Barcia Hist. Prim. tom. i.

Cabeza de Baca—Examen Apologetico de la Histor. Narration de los Naufragios. Exst. Barcia Hist. Prim. tom. i.

——————— Commentaries de lo succedido duarante su gubierno del Rio de la Plata. Exst. ibid.

Cabo de Vacca Relatione de. Exst. Ramus. III. 310.

Cabota (Sebast.) Navigazione de. Exst. Ramus II. 211.

Cadamustus (Aloysius) Navigatio ad Terras incognitas. Exst. Nov. Orb. Grynæi, p. 1.

Calancha (F. Anton. de la) Cronica moralizada del Orden de San Augustin en el Peru. fol. Barcelona, 1638.

California—Diario Historico de los Viages de Mar y Tierra hechos en 1768, al Norte de California di orden del Marques de Croix Vi-rey de Nueva Espagna, &c. MS.

Calle (Juan Diaz de la) Memorial Informatorio de lo que a su Magestad Provien de la Nueva Espagna y Peru. 4to. 1645.

Campomanes (D. Pedro Rodrig.) Antiguedad Maritima de la Republica de Cartago, con en Periplo de su general Hannon traducido e illustrado. 4to. Mad. 1756.

——————— Discurso sobre el fomento de la Industria popular. 8vo. Mad. 1774.

——————— Discurso sobre la Educacion popular de los Artesanos, 8vo. 5 vol. Mad. 1775, &c.

Caracas—Real Cedula de Fundacion de la real Compagnia Guipuscoana de Caracas, 12mo. Mad. 1765.

Caravantes (Fr. Lopez de) Relacion de las Provincias que tiene el Govierno del Peru, los Officios que en el se Provien, y la Hacienda que alli tiene su Magestad, lo que se Gasta de ella y le queda Libre, &c. &c. Dedicado al Marques de Santos Claros, Agno, de 1611. MS.

Cardenas y Cano (Gabr.) Ensayo Cronologico para la Historia general de la Florida. fol. Mad. 1733.

Carranzana (D. Gonçales) A Geographical Description of the Coasts, &c. of the Spanish West-Indies, 8vo. Lond. 1740.

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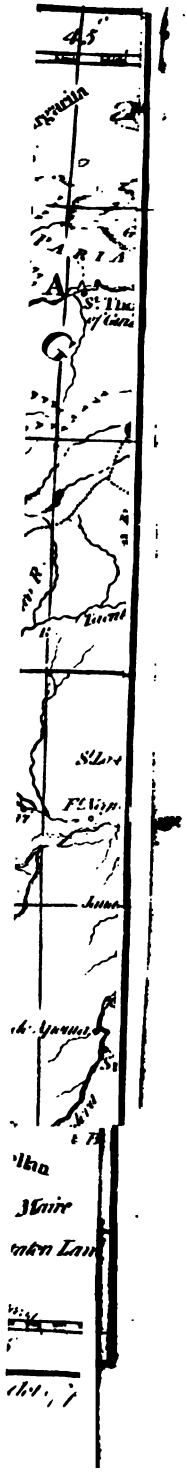
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THE

HISTORY

OF

AMERICA.

BOOK I.

THE progress of men in discovering and peopling the various parts of the earth, has been extremely slow. Several ages elapsed before they removed far from those mild and fertile regions in which they were originally placed by their Creator. The occasion of their first general dispersion is known; but we are unacquainted with the course of their migrations, or the time when they took possession of the different countries which they now inhabit. Neither history nor tradition furnish such information concerning those remote events, as enables us to trace, with any certainty, the operations of the human race in the infancy of society.

BOOK I.

The earth slowly peopled.

BOOK I

First migrations by land.

We may conclude, however, that all the early migrations of mankind were made by land. The ocean, which surrounds the habitable earth, as well as the various arms of the sea which separate one region from another, though destined to facilitate the communication between distant countries, seem, at first view, to be formed to check the progress of man, and to mark the bounds of that portion of the globe to which nature had confined him. It was long, we may believe, before men attempted to pass these formidable barriers, and became so skilful and adventurous as to commit themselves to the mercy of the winds and waves, or to quit their native shores in quest of remote and unknown regions.

First attempts towards navigation.

Navigation and ship-building are arts so nice and complicated, that they require the ingenuity, as well as experience, of many successive ages to bring them to any degree of perfection. From the raft or canoe, which first served to carry a savage over the river that obstructed him in the chase, to the construction of a vessel capable of conveying a numerous crew with safety to a distant coast, the progress in improvement is immense. Many efforts would be made, many experiments would be tried, and much labour as well as

invention would be employed, before men could accomplish this arduous and important undertaking. The rude and imperfect state in which navigation is still found among all nations which are not considerably civilised, corresponds with this account of its progress, and demonstrates that, in early times, the art was not so far improved as to enable men to undertake distant voyages, or to attempt remote discoveries.

Introduction of commerce.

As soon, however, as the art of navigation became known, a new species of correspondence among men took place. It is from this æra, that we must date the commencement of such an intercourse between nations as deserves the appellation of commerce. Men are, indeed, far advanced in improvement before commerce becomes an object of great importance to them. They must even have made some considerable progress towards civilisation, before they acquire the idea of property, and ascertain it so perfectly as to be acquainted with the most simple of all contracts, that of exchanging by barter one rude commodity for another. But as soon as this important right is established, and every individual feels that he has an exclusive title to possess or to alienate whatever he has acquired by his own labour and dexte-

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rity, the wants and ingenuity of his nature suggest to him a new method of increasing his acquisitions and enjoyments, by disposing of what is superfluous in his own stores, in order to procure what is necessary or desirable in those of other men. Thus a commercial intercourse begins, and is carried on among the members of the same community. By degrees, they discover that neighbouring tribes possess what they themselves want, and enjoy comforts of which they wish to partake. In the same mode, and upon the same principles, that domestic traffic is carried on within the society, an external commerce is established with other tribes or nations. Their mutual interest and mutual wants render this intercourse desirable, and imperceptibly introduce the maxims and laws which facilitate its progress and render it secure. But no very extensive commerce can take place between contiguous provinces, whose soil and climate being nearly the same, yield similar productions. Remote countries cannot convey their commodities by land, to those places, where on account of their rarity they are desired, and become valuable. It is to navigation that men are indebted for the power of transporting the superfluous stock of one part of the earth to supply the wants of another. The luxuries and blessings of a par-

ticular climate are no longer confined to itself alone, but the enjoyment of them is communicated to the most distant regions.

In proportion as the knowledge of the advantages derived from navigation and commerce continued to spread, the intercourse among nations extended. The ambition of conquest, or the necessity of procuring new settlements, were no longer the sole motives of visiting distant lands. The desire of gain became a new incentive to activity, roused adventurers, and sent them forth upon long voyages, in search of countries, whose products or wants might increase that circulation, which nourishes and gives vigour to commerce. Trade proved a great source of discovery, it opened unknown seas, it penetrated into new regions, and contributed more than any other cause, to bring men acquainted with the situation, the nature, and commodities of the different parts of the globe. But even after a regular commerce was established in the world, after nations were considerably civilised, and the sciences and arts were cultivated with ardour and success, navigation continued to be so imperfect, that it can hardly be said to have advanced beyond the infancy of its improvement in the ancient world.

BOOK I.

Imperfection of navigation among the ancients.

Among all the nations of antiquity, the structure of their vessels was extremely rude, and their method of working them very defective. They were unacquainted with several principles and operations in navigation, which are now considered as the first elements on which that science is founded. Though that property of the magnet, by which it attracts iron, was well known to the ancients, its more important and amazing virtue of pointing to the poles had entirely escaped their observation. Destitute of this faithful guide, which now conducts the pilot with so much certainty in the unbounded ocean, during the darkness of night, or when the heavens are covered with clouds, the ancients had no other method of regulating their course than by observing the sun and stars. Their navigation was of consequence uncertain and timid. They durst seldom quit sight of land, but crept along the coast, exposed to all the dangers, and retarded by all the obstructions, unavoidable in holding such an aukward course. An incredible length of time was requisite for performing voyages, which are now finished in a short space. Even in the mildest climates, and in seas the least tempestuous, it was only during the summer months that the ancients ventured out of their harbours. The remainder of the year was lost

in inactivity. It would have been deemed most inconsiderate rashness to have braved the fury of the winds and waves during winter.[a]

WHILE both the science and practice of navigation continued to be so defective, it was an undertaking of no small difficulty and danger to visit any remote region of the earth. Under every disadvantage, however, the active spirit of commerce exerted itself. The Egyptians, soon after the establishment of their monarchy, are said to have opened a trade between the Arabian Gulf or Red Sea, and the western coast of the great Indian continent. The commodities which they imported from the East, were carried by land from the Arabian Gulf to the banks of the Nile, and conveyed down that river to the Mediterranean. But if the Egyptians in early times applied themselves to commerce, their attention to it was of short duration. The fertile soil and mild climate of Egypt produced the necessaries and comforts of life with such profusion, as rendered its inhabitants so independent of other countries, that it became an established maxim among that people, whose ideas and institutions differed in almost every point from those of other nations, to renounce all intercourse with fo-

Navigation and commerce of the Egyptians.

[a] Vegetius de Re milit. lib. iv.

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reigners. In consequence of this, they never went out of their own country; they held all sea-faring persons in detestation, as impious and profane; and fortifying their own harbours, they denied strangers admittance into them.[b] It was in the decline of their power, and when their veneration for ancient maxims had greatly abated, that they again opened their ports, and resumed any communication with foreigners.

Of the Phenicians.

THE character and situation of the Phenicians were as favourable to the spirit of commerce and discovery as those of the Egyptians were adverse to it. They had no distinguishing peculiarity in their manners and institutions; they were not addicted to any singular and unsocial form of superstition; they could mingle with other nations without scruple or reluctance. The territory which they possessed was neither large nor fertile. Commerce was the only source from which they could derive opulence or power. Accordingly, the trade carried on by the Phenicians of Sidon and Tyre, was more extensive and enterprising than that of any state in the ancient world. The genius of the Phenicians, as well as the object

[b] Diod. Sicul. lib. i. p. 78. ed. Wesselingi. Amst. 1756. Strabo, lib. xvii. p. 1142. ed. Amst. 1707.

of their policy and the spirit of their laws, were entirely commercial. They were a people of merchants who aimed at the empire of the sea, and actually possessed it. Their ships not only frequented all the ports in the Mediterranean, but they were the first who ventured beyond the ancient boundaries of navigation, and, passing the Streights of Gades, visited the western coasts of Spain and Africa. In many of the places to which they resorted, they planted colonies, and communicated to the rude inhabitants some knowledge of their arts and improvements. While they extended their discoveries towards the north and the west, they did not neglect to penetrate into the more opulent and fertile regions of the south and east. Having rendered themselves masters of several commodious harbours towards the bottom of the Arabian Gulf, they, after the example of the Egyptians, established a regular intercourse with Arabia and the continent of India on the one hand, and with the eastern coast of Africa on the other. From these countries they imported many valuable commodities unknown to the rest of the world, and, during a long period, engrossed that lucrative branch of commerce without a rival.[c]

[c] See NOTE I. at the end of the volume.

BOOK I. Of the Jews.

THE vast wealth which the Phenicians acquired by monopolising the trade carried on in the Red Sea, incited their neighbours the Jews, under the prosperous reigns of David and Solomon, to aim at being admitted to some share of it. This they obtained, partly by their conquest of Idumea, which stretches along the Red Sea, and partly by their alliance with Hiram King of Tyre. Solomon fitted out fleets, which, under the direction of Phenician pilots, sailed from the Red Sea to Tarshish and Ophir. These, it is probable, were ports in India and Africa, which their conductors were accustomed to frequent, and from them the Jewish ships returned with such valuable cargoes as suddenly diffused wealth and splendour through the kingdom of Israel.[d] But the singular institutions of the Jews, the observance of which was enjoined by their divine Legislator, with an intention of preserving them a separate people, uninfected by idolatry, formed a national character, incapable of that open and liberal intercourse with strangers which commerce requires. Accordingly, this unsocial genius of the people, together with the disasters which befel the kingdom of Israel, prevented the commercial spirit

[d] Memoire sur le Pays d'Ophir, par M. d'Anville, Mem. de l'Academ. des Inscript. &c. tom. xxx. 83.

which their monarchs laboured to introduce, and to cherish, from spreading among them. The Jews cannot be numbered among the nations which contributed to improve navigation, or to extend discovery.

Of the Carthaginians.

BUT though the instructions and example of the Phenicians were unable to mould the manners and temper of the Jews, in opposition to the tendency of their laws, they transmitted the commercial spirit with facility, and in full vigour, to their own descendants the Carthaginians. The commonwealth of Carthage applied to trade and to naval affairs, with no less ardour, ingenuity, and success, than its parent-state. Carthage early rivalled, and soon surpassed Tyre in opulence and power, but seems not to have aimed at obtaining any share in the commerce with India. The Phenicians had engrossed this, and had such a command of the Red Sea as secured to them the exclusive possession of that lucrative branch of trade. The commercial activity of the Carthaginians was exerted in another direction. Without contending for the trade of the east with their mother-country, they extended their navigation chiefly towards the west and north. Following the course which the Phenicians had opened, they passed the Streights of Gades,

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and, pushing their discoveries far beyond those of the parent-state, visited not only all the coasts of Spain, but those of Gaul, and penetrated at last into Britain. At the same time that they acquired knowledge of new countries in this part of the globe, they gradually carried their researches towards the south. They made considerable progress, by land, into the interior provinces of Africa, traded with some of them, and subjected others to their empire. They sailed along the western coast of that great continent, almost to the tropic of Cancer, and planted several colonies, in order to civilise the natives, and accustom them to commerce. They discovered the Fortunate Islands, now known by the name of the Canaries, the utmost boundary of ancient navigation in the western ocean.[e]

Nor was the progress of the Phenicians and Carthaginians in their knowledge of the globe, owing entirely to the desire of extending their trade from one country to another. Commerce was followed by its usual effects among both these people. It awakened curiosity, enlarged the ideas and desires of men, and incited

[e] Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 37. edit. in usum Delph. 4to. 1685.

them to bold enterprises. Voyages were undertaken, the sole object of which was to discover new countries, and to explore unknown seas. Such, during the prosperous age of the Carthaginian republic, were the famous navigations of Hanno and Himlico. Both their fleets were equipped by authority of the senate, and at public expense. Hanno was directed to steer towards the south, along the coast of Africa, and he seems to have advanced much nearer the equinoctial line than any former navigator.[f] Himlico had it in charge to proceed towards the north, and to examine the western coasts of the European continent.[g] Of the same nature was the extraordinary navigation of the Phenicians round Africa. A Phenician fleet, we are told, fitted out by Necho King of Egypt, took its departure about six hundred and four years before the Christian æra, from a port in the Red Sea, doubled the southern promontory of Africa, and, after a voyage of three years, returned by the Streights of Gades to the mouth of the Nile.[h] Eudoxus

[f] Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. v. c. 1. Hanonis Periplus ap. Geograph. minores, edit. Hudsoni, vol. i. p. i.

[g] Plinii. Nat. Hist. lib. ii. c. 67. Festus Avienus apud Bochart. Geogr. Sacr. lib. i. c. 60. p. 652. Oper. vol. iii. L. Bat. 1707.

[h] Herodot. lib. iv. c. 42.

BOOK I. of Cyzicus is said to have held the same course, and to have accomplished the same arduous undertaking.[1]

THESE voyages, if performed in the manner which I have related, may justly be reckoned the greatest effort of navigation in the ancient world; and if we attend to the imperfect state of the art at that time, it is difficult to determine, whether we should most admire the courage and sagacity with which the design was formed, or the conduct and good fortune with which it was executed. But unfortunately, all the original and authentic accounts of the Phenician and Carthaginian voyages, whether undertaken by public authority, or in prosecution of their private trade, have perished. The information which we receive concerning them from the Greek and Roman authors is not only obscure and inaccurate, but, if we except a short narrative of Hanno's expedition, is of suspicious authority.[k] Whatever acquaintance with the remote regions of the earth the Phenicians or Carthaginians may have acquired, was concealed from the rest of mankind with a mercantile jealousy. Every thing re-

[1] Plinii. Nat. Hist. lib. ii. c. 67.

[k] See NOTE II.

lative to the course of their navigation was not only a mystery of trade, but a secret of state. Extraordinary facts are related concerning their solicitude to prevent other nations from penetrating into what they wished should remain undivulged.[1] Many of their discoveries seem, accordingly, to have been scarcely known beyond the precincts of their own states. The navigation round Africa, in particular, is recorded by the Greek and Roman writers, rather as a strange amusing tale, which they did not comprehend, or did not believe, than as a real transaction, which enlarged their knowledge and influenced their opinions.[m] As neither the progress of the Phenician or Carthaginian discoveries, nor the extent of their navigation, were communicated to the rest of mankind, all memorials of their extraordinary skill in naval affairs seem, in a great measure, to have perished, when the maritime power of the former was annihilated by Alexander's conquest of Tyre, and the empire of the latter was overturned by the Roman arms.

Of the Greeks.

LEAVING, then, the obscure and pompous accounts of the Phenician and Carthaginian

[1] Strab. Geogr. lib. iii. p. 265. lib. xviii. p. 1154.

[m] See NOTE III.

BOOK I. voyages to the curiosity and conjectures of antiquaries, history must rest satisfied with relating the progress of navigation and discovery among the Greeks and Romans, which, though less splendid, is better ascertained. It is evident that the Phenicians, who instructed the Greeks in many other useful sciences and arts, did not communicate to them that extensive knowledge of navigation which they themselves possessed; nor did the Romans imbibe that commercial spirit and ardour for discovery which distinguished their rivals the Carthaginians. Though Greece be almost encompassed by the sea, which formed many spacious bays and commodious harbours; though it be surrounded by a great number of fertile islands, yet, notwithstanding such a favourable situation, which seemed to invite that ingenious people to apply themselves to navigation, it was long before this art attained any degree of perfection among them. Their early voyages, the object of which was piracy rather than commerce, were so inconsiderable, that the expedition of the Argonauts from the coast of Thessaly to the Euxine Sea, appeared such an amazing effort of skill and courage, as entitled the conductors of it to be ranked among the demigods, and ex-

alted the vessel in which they sailed to a place among the heavenly constellations. Even at a later period, when the Greeks engaged in their famous enterprise against Troy, their knowledge in naval affairs seems not to have been much improved. According to the account of Homer, the only poet to whom history ventures to appeal, and who, by his scrupulous accuracy in describing the manners and arts of early ages, merits this distinction, the science of navigation, at that time, had hardly advanced beyond its rudest state. The Greeks in the heroic age seem to have been unacquainted with the use of iron, the most serviceable of all the metals, without which no considerable progress was ever made in the mechanical arts. Their vessels were of inconsiderable burden, and mostly without decks. They had only one mast, which was erected or taken down at pleasure. They were strangers to the use of anchors. All their operations in sailing were clumsy and unskilful. They turned their observation towards stars, which were improper for regulating their course, and their mode of observing them was inaccurate and fallacious. When they had finished a voyage they drew their paltry barks ashore, as savages do their canoes, and these remained on dry land until the season of returning to sea approached. It

BOOK I. is not then in the early or heroic ages of Greece, that we can expect to observe the science of navigation, and the spirit of discovery, making any considerable progress. During that period of disorder and ignorance, a thousand causes concurred in restraining curiosity and enterprise within very narrow bounds.

But the Greeks advanced with rapidity to a state of greater civilisation and refinement. Government, in its most liberal and perfect form, began to be established in their different communities; equal laws and regular police were gradually introduced; the sciences and arts which are useful or ornamental in life were carried to a high pitch of improvement, and several of the Grecian commonwealths applied to commerce with such ardour and success, that they were considered, in the ancient world, as maritime powers of the first rank. Even then, however, the naval victories of the Greeks must be ascribed rather to the native spirit of the people, and to that courage which the enjoyment of liberty inspires, than to any extraordinary progress in the science of navigation. In the Persian war, those exploits which the genius of the Greek historians has rendered so famous, were performed by fleets,

composed chiefly of small vessels without decks[n]; the crews of which rushed forward with impetuous valour, but little art, to board those of the enemy. In the war of Peloponnesus, their ships seem still to have been of inconsiderable burden and force. The extent of their trade, how highly soever it may have been estimated in ancient times, was in proportion to this low condition of their marine. The maritime states of Greece hardly carried on any commerce beyond the limits of the Mediterranean sea. Their chief intercourse was with the colonies of their countrymen, planted in the Lesser Asia, in Italy and Sicily. They sometimes visited the ports of Egypt, of the southern provinces of Gaul, and of Thrace, or passing through the Hellespont, they traded with the countries situated around the Euxine sea. Amazing instances occur of their ignorance, even of those countries which lay within the narrow precincts to which their navigation was confined. When the Greeks had assembled their combined fleet against Xerxes at Egina, they thought it unadvisable to sail to Samos, because they believed the distance between that island and Egina to be as great as the distance between Egina and

[n] Thucyd. lib. i. c. 14.

BOOK I.

the Pillars of Hercules.° They were either utterly unacquainted with all the parts of the globe beyond the Mediterranean sea, or what knowledge they had of them was founded on conjecture, or derived from the information of a few persons, whom curiosity and the love of science had prompted to travel by land into the Upper Asia, or by sea into Egypt, the ancient seats of wisdom and arts. After all that the Greeks learned from them, they appear to have been ignorant of the most important facts, on which an accurate and scientific knowledge of the globe is founded.

The expedition of Alexander the Great into the east, considerably enlarged the sphere of navigation and of geographical knowledge among the Greeks. That extraordinary man, notwithstanding the violent passions which incited him, at some times, to the wildest actions, and the most extravagant enterprises, possessed talents which fitted him not only to conquer, but to govern the world. He was capable of framing those bold and original schemes of policy, which gave a new form to human affairs. The revolution in commerce, brought about by the force of his genius, is hardly in-

° Herodot. lib. viii. c. 132.

ferior to that revolution in empire, occasioned by the success of his arms. It is probable, that the opposition and efforts of the republic of Tyre, which checked him so long in the career of his victories, gave Alexander an opportunity of observing the vast resources of a maritime power, and conveyed to him some idea of the immense wealth which the Tyrians derived from their commerce, especially that with the East-Indies. As soon as he had accomplished the destruction of Tyre, and reduced Egypt to subjection, he formed the plan of rendering the empire which he proposed to establish, the centre of commerce as well as the seat of dominion. With this view he founded a great city, which he honoured with his own name, near one of the mouths of the river Nile, that by the Mediterranean sea, and the neighbourhood of the Arabian Gulf, it might command the trade both of the east and west.[p] This situation was chosen with such discernment, that Alexandria soon became the chief commercial city in the world. Not only during the subsistence of the Grecian empire in Egypt and in the east, but amidst all the successive revolutions in those countries from the time of the Ptolemies to

BOOK I.

[p] Strab. Geogr. lib. xvii. p. 1143. 1149.

BOOK I. the discovery of the navigation by the Cape of Good Hope, commerce, particularly that of the East-Indies, continued to flow in the channel which the sagacity and foresight of Alexander had marked out for it.

His ambition was not satisfied with having opened to the Greeks a communication with India by sea; he aspired to the sovereignty of those regions which furnished the rest of mankind with so many precious commodities, and conducted his army thither by land. Enterprising, however, as he was, he may be said rather to have viewed, than to have conquered that country. He did not, in his progress towards the east, advance beyond the banks of the rivers that fall into the Indus, which is now the western boundary of the vast continent of India. Amidst the wild exploits which distinguish this part of his history, he pursued measures that mark the superiority of his genius as well as the extent of his views. He had penetrated as far into India as to confirm his opinion of its commercial importance, and to perceive that immense wealth might be derived from intercourse with a country, where the arts of elegance, having been more early cultivated, were arrived at greater perfection than in any other

part of the earth.[q] Full of this idea, he resolved to examine the course of navigation from the mouth of the Indus to the bottom of the Persian Gulf; and, if it should be found practicable, to establish a regular communication between them. In order to effect this, he proposed to remove the cataracts, with which the jealousy of the Persians, and their aversion to correspondence with foreigners, had obstructed the entrance into the Euphrates[r]; to carry the commodities of the East up that river, and the Tigris, which unites with it, into the interior parts of his Asiatic dominions; while, by the way of the Arabian Gulf, and the river Nile, they might be conveyed to Alexandria, and distributed to the rest of the world. Nearchus, an officer of eminent abilities, was intrusted with the command of the fleet fitted out for this expedition. He performed this voyage, which was deemed an enterprise so arduous and important, that Alexander reckoned it one of the most extraordinary events which distinguished his reign. Inconsiderable as it may now appear, it was, at that time, an undertaking of no little merit and difficulty. In the prosecution of it, striking instances occur

[q] Strab. Geogr. lib. xv. p. 1036. Q. Curtius, lib. xviii. c. 9.

[r] Strab. Geogr. lib. xvi. p. 1075.

BOOK I. of the small progress which the Greeks had made in naval knowledge.[s] Having never sailed beyond the bounds of the Mediterranean, where the ebb and flow of the sea are hardly perceptible, when they first observed this phænomenon at the mouth of the Indus, it appeared to them a prodigy, by which the gods testified the displeasure of heaven against their enterprise.[t] During their whole course, they seem never to have lost sight of land, but followed the bearings of the coast so servilely, that they could not much avail themselves of those periodical winds, which facilitate navigation in the Indian ocean. Accordingly, they spent no less than ten months in performing this voyage[u], which, from the mouth of the Indus to that of the Persian Gulf, does not exceed twenty degrees. It is probable, that, amidst the violent convulsions and frequent revolutions in the East, occasioned by the contests among the successors of Alexander, the navigation to India by the course which Nearchus had opened was discontinued. The Indian trade carried on at Alexandria, not only subsisted, but was so much extended under the Grecian monarchs of Egypt, that it proved a great source of the wealth which distinguished their kingdom.

[s] See NOTE IV. [t] See NOTE V.
[u] Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. vi. c. 23.

THE progress which the Romans made in navigation and discovery, was still more inconsiderable than that of the Greeks. The genius of the Roman people, their military education, and the spirit of their laws, concurred in estranging them from commerce and naval affairs. It was the necessity of opposing a formidable rival, not the desire of extending trade, which first prompted them to aim at maritime power. Though they soon perceived that in order to acquire the universal dominion after which they aspired, it was necessary to render themselves masters of the sea, they still considered the naval service as a subordinate station, and reserved for it such citizens as were not of a rank to be admitted into the legions.[x] In the history of the Roman republic, hardly one event occurs, that marks attention to navigation any farther than as it was instrumental towards conquest. When the Roman valour and discipline had subdued all the maritime states known in the ancient world; when Carthage, Greece, and Egypt, had submitted to their power, the Romans did not imbibe the commercial spirit of the conquered nations. Among that people of soldiers, to have applied to trade would

[x] Polyb. lib. v.

BOOK I.

have been deemed a degradation of a Roman citizen. They abandoned the mechanical arts, commerce, and navigation, to slaves, to freedmen, to provincials, and to citizens of the lowest class. Even after the subversion of liberty, when the severity and haughtiness of ancient manners began to abate, commerce did not rise into high estimation among the Romans. The trade of Greece, Egypt, and the other conquered countries, continued to be carried on in its usual channels, after they were reduced into the form of Roman provinces. As Rome was the capital of the world, and the seat of government, all the wealth and valuable productions of the provinces flowed naturally thither. The Romans, satisfied with this, seem to have suffered commerce to remain almost entirely in the hands of the natives of the respective countries. The extent, however, of the Roman power, which reached over the greatest part of the known world, the vigilant inspection of the Roman magistrates, and the spirit of the Roman government, no less intelligent than active, gave such additional security to commerce, as animated it with new vigour. The union among nations was never so entire, nor the intercourse so perfect, as within the bounds of this vast empire. Commerce, under the Roman dominion, was not obstructed by

the jealousy of rival states, interrupted by frequent hostilities, or limited by partial restrictions. One superintending power moved and regulated the industry of mankind, and enjoyed the fruits of their joint efforts.

NAVIGATION felt this influence, and improved under it. As soon as the Romans acquired a taste for the luxuries of the East, the trade with India through Egypt was pushed with new vigour, and carried on to greater extent. By frequenting the Indian continent, navigators became acquainted with the periodical course of the winds, which, in the ocean that separates Africa from India, blow with little variation during one half of the year from the east, and during the other half blow with equal steadiness from the west. Encouraged by observing this, the pilots who sailed from Egypt to India abandoned their ancient slow and dangerous course along the coast, and as soon as the western monsoon set in, took their departure from Ocelis, at the mouth of the Arabian Gulf, and stretched boldly across the ocean.[y] The uniform direction of the wind, supplying the place of the compass, and rendering the guidance of the stars less necessary, conducted them to the port of

[y] Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 23.

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[z] Strab. Geogr. lib. xv. p. 1006. 1010. See NOTE VI.
[a] Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 26.

in quest of the countries which produced them. But though the discoveries of the Romans in India were so limited, their commerce there was such as will appear considerable, even to the present age, in which the Indian trade has been extended far beyond the practice or conception of any preceding period. We are informed by one author of credit[b], that the commerce with India drained the Roman empire every year of more than four hundred thousand pounds; and by another, that one hundred and twenty ships sailed annually from the Arabian Gulf to that country.[c]

Discoveries of the ancients by land.

THE discovery of this new method of sailing to India, is the most considerable improvement in navigation made during the continuance of the Roman power. But in ancient times, the knowledge of remote countries was acquired more frequently by land than by sea[d]; and the Romans, from their peculiar disinclination to naval affairs, may be said to have neglected totally the latter, though a more easy and expeditious method of discovery. The progress, however, of their victorious armies through a considerable portion of Europe, Asia, and Africa, contributed greatly to extend discovery by land, and gra-

[b] Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 26.

[c] Strab. Geogr. lib. ii. p. 179.

[d] See NOTE VII.

BOOK I. dually opened the navigation of new and unknown seas. Previous to the Roman conquests, the civilised nations of antiquity had little communication with those countries in Europe, which now form its most opulent and powerful kingdoms. The interior parts of Spain and Gaul were imperfectly known. Britain, separated from the rest of the world, had never been visited, except by its neighbours the Gauls, and by a few Carthaginian merchants. The name of Germany had scarcely been heard of. Into all these countries the arms of the Romans penetrated. They entirely subdued Spain and Gaul; they conquered the greatest and most fertile part of Britain; they advanced into Germany, as far as the banks of the river Elbe. In Africa, they acquired a considerable knowledge of the provinces, which stretch along the Mediterranean sea, from Egypt westward to the Streights of Gades. In Asia, they not only subjected to their power most of the provinces which composed the Persian and the Macedonian empires, but, after their victories over Mithridates and Tigranes, they seem to have made a more accurate survey of the countries contiguous to the Euxine and Caspian seas, and to have carried on a more extensive trade than that of the Greeks with the opulent and commercial nations then seated round the Euxine sea.

Imperfection of geographical knowledge among the ancients.

FROM this succinct survey of discovery and navigation, which I have traced from the earliest dawn of historical knowledge, to the full establishment of the Roman dominion, the progress of both appears to have been wonderfully slow. It seems neither adequate to what we might have expected from the activity and enterprise of the human mind, nor to what might have been performed by the power of the great empires which successively governed the world. If we reject accounts that are fabulous and obscure; if we adhere steadily to the light and information of authentic history, without substituting in its place the conjectures of fancy or the dreams of etymologists, we must conclude, that the knowledge which the ancients had acquired of the habitable globe was extremely confined. In Europe, the extensive provinces in the eastern part of Germany were little known to them. They were almost totally unacquainted with the vast countries which are now subject to the Kings of Denmark, Sweden, Prussia, Poland, and the Russian empire. The more barren regions, that stretch within the arctic circle, were quite unexplored. In Africa, their researches did not extend far beyond the provinces which border on the Mediterranean, and those situated on the western shore of the Arabian Gulf. In Asia, they were unacquainted, as

BOOK I. I formerly observed, with all the fertile and opulent countries beyond the Ganges, which furnish the most valuable commodities that, in modern times, have been the great object of the European commerce with India; nor do they seem to have ever penetrated into those immense regions occupied by the wandering tribes, which they called by the general name of Sarmatians or Scythians, and which are now possessed by Tartars of various denominations, and by the Asiatic subjects of Russia.

A remarkable proof of this.

But there is one opinion, that universally prevailed among the ancients, which conveys a more striking idea of the small progress they had made in the knowledge of the habitable globe, than can be derived from any detail of their discoveries. They supposed the earth to be divided into five regions, which they distinguished by the name of Zones. Two of these, which were nearest the poles, they termed Frigid zones, and believed that the extreme cold which reigned perpetually there, rendered them uninhabitable. Another, seated under the line, and extending on either side towards the tropics, they called the Torrid zone, and imagined it to be so burnt up with unremitting heat, as to be equally destitute of inhabitants. On the two other zones,

which occupied the remainder of the earth, they bestowed the appellation of temperate, and taught that these, being the only regions in which life could subsist, were allotted to man for his habitation. This wild opinion was not a conceit of the uninformed vulgar, or a fanciful fiction of the poets, but a system adopted by the most enlightened philosophers, the most accurate historians and geographers in Greece and Rome. According to this theory, a vast portion of the habitable earth was pronounced to be unfit for sustaining the human species. Those fertile and populous regions within the torrid zone, which are now known not only to yield their own inhabitants the necessaries and comforts of life, with most luxuriant profusion, but to communicate their superfluous stores to the rest of the world, were supposed to be the mansion of perpetual sterility and desolation. As all the parts of the globe with which the ancients were acquainted, lay within the northern temperate zone, their opinion that the other temperate zone was filled with inhabitants, was founded on reasoning and conjecture, not on discovery. They even believed, that by the intolerable heat of the torrid zone, such an insuperable barrier was placed between the two temperate regions of the earth as would prevent for ever any intercourse between their respective in-

BOOK I. habitants. Thus this extravagant theory not only proves that the ancients were unacquainted with the true state of the globe, but it tended to render their ignorance perpetual, by representing all attempts towards opening a communication with the remote regions of the earth, as utterly impracticable.[f]

But, however imperfect or inaccurate the geographical knowledge which the Greeks and Romans had acquired may appear, in respect of the present improved state of that science, their progress in discovery will seem considerable, and the extent to which they carried navigation and commerce must be reckoned great, when compared with the ignorance of early times. As long as the Roman empire retained such vigour as to preserve its authority over the conquered nations, and to keep them united, it was an object of public policy, as well as of private curiosity, to examine and describe the countries which composed this great body. Even when the other sciences began to decline, geography, enriched with new observations, and receiving some accession from the experience of every age, and the reports of every traveller, continued to improve. It attained to the highest point of

[f] See NOTE VIII.

perfection and accuracy to which it ever arrived in the ancient world, by the industry and genius of Ptolemy the philosopher. He flourished in the second century of the Christian æra, and published a description of the terrestrial globe, more ample and exact than that of any of his predecessors.

Improvements in geography by Ptolemy.

But, soon after, violent convulsions began to shake the Roman state; the fatal ambition or caprice of Constantine, by changing the seat of government, divided and weakened its force; the barbarous nations, which Providence prepared as instruments to overturn the mighty fabric of the Roman power, began to assemble and to muster their armies on its frontier: the empire tottered to its fall. During this decline and old age of the Roman state, it was impossible that the sciences should go on improving. The efforts of genius were, at that period, as languid and feeble as those of government. From the time of Ptolemy, no considerable addition seems to have been made to geographical knowledge, nor did any important revolution happen in trade, excepting that Constantinople, by its advantageous situation, and the encouragement of the eastern emperors, became a commercial city of the first note.

The invasion of the Roman empire by barbarous nations.

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Effects of their conquests on commercial intercourse.

At length, the clouds which had been so long gathering round the Roman empire, burst into a storm. Barbarous nations rushed in from several quarters with irresistible impetuosity, and, in the general wreck, occasioned by the inundation which overwhelmed Europe, the arts, sciences, inventions, and discoveries of the Romans, perished in a great measure, and disappeared.[g] All the various tribes, which settled in the different provinces of the Roman empire, were uncivilised, strangers to letters, destitute of arts, unacquainted with regular government, subordination, or laws. The manners and institutions of some of them were so rude, as to be hardly compatible with a state of social union. Europe, when occupied by such inhabitants, may be said to have returned to a second infancy, and had to begin anew its career in improvement, science, and civility. The first effect of the settlement of those barbarous invaders was to dissolve the union by which the Roman power had cemented mankind together. They parcelled out Europe into many small and independent states, differing from each other in language and customs. No intercourse subsisted between the members of those divided and hostile communities. Accustomed to a simple mode of life,

[g] Hist. of Charles V. vol. i. p. 18. 72.

and averse to industry, they had few wants to supply, and few superfluities to dispose of. The names of *stranger* and *enemy* became once more words of the same import. Customs every where prevailed, and even laws were established, which rendered it disagreeable and dangerous to visit any foreign country.[h] Cities, in which alone an extensive commerce can be carried on, were few, inconsiderable, and destitute of those immunities which produce security or excite enterprise. The sciences, on which geography and navigation are founded, were little cultivated. The accounts of ancient improvements and discoveries, contained in the Greek and Roman authors, were neglected or misunderstood. The knowledge of remote regions was lost, their situation, their commodities, and almost their names, were unknown.

Commerce still preserved in the Eastern empire,

One circumstance prevented commercial intercourse with distant nations from ceasing altogether. Constantinople, though often threatened by the fierce invaders, who spread desolation over the rest of Europe, was so fortunate as to escape their destructive rage. In that city, the knowledge of ancient arts and discoveries was preserved; a taste for splendour

[h] Hist. of Charles V. vol. i. p. 77. 327.

BOOK I. and elegance subsisted; the productions and luxuries of foreign countries were in request; and commerce continued to flourish there when it was almost extinct in every other part of Europe. The citizens of Constantinople did not confine their trade to the islands of the Archipelago, or to the adjacent coasts of Asia; they took a wider range, and following the course which the ancients had marked out, imported the commodities of the East Indies from Alexandria. When Egypt was torn from the Roman empire by the Arabians, the industry of the Greeks discovered a new channel, by which the productions of India might be conveyed to Constantinople. They were carried up the Indus, as far as that great river is navigable; thence they were transported by land to the banks of the river Oxus, and proceeded down its stream to the Caspian sea. There they entered the Volga, and sailing up it, were carried by land to the Tanais, which conducted them into the Euxine sea, where vessels from Constantinople waited their arrival.[1] This extraordinary and tedious mode of conveyance merits attention, not only as a proof of the violent passion which the inhabitants of Constantinople had conceived for the luxuries of the East, and as a specimen

[1] Ramusio, vol. i. p. 372. F.

of the ardour and ingenuity with which they carried on commerce; but because it demonstrates, that during the ignorance which reigned in the rest of Europe, an extensive knowledge of remote countries was still preserved in the capital of the Greek empire.

and among the Arabians.

At the same time, a gleam of light and knowledge broke in upon the East. The Arabians having contracted some relish for the sciences of the people whose empire they had contributed to overturn, translated the books of several of the Greek philosophers into their own language. One of the first was that valuable work of Ptolemy, which I have already mentioned. The study of geography became, of consequence, an early object of attention to the Arabians. But that acute and ingenious people cultivated chiefly the speculative and scientific parts of geography. In order to ascertain the figure and dimensions of the terrestrial globe, they applied the principles of geometry, they had recourse to astronomical observations, they employed experiments and operations, which Europe, in more enlightened times, has been proud to adopt and to imitate. At that period, however, the fame of the improvements made by the Arabians did not reach Europe. The knowledge of their discoveries was reserved for ages

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capable of comprehending and of perfecting them.

Revival of commerce and navigation in Europe.

By degrees, the calamities and desolation brought upon the western provinces of the Roman empire by its barbarous conquerors, were forgotten, and in some measure repaired. The rude tribes which settled there, acquiring insensibly some idea of regular government, and some relish for the functions and comforts of civil life, Europe began to awake from its torpid and unactive state. The first symptoms of revival were discerned in Italy. The northern tribes which took possession of this country, made progress in improvement with greater rapidity than the people settled in other parts of Europe. Various causes, which it is not the object of this work to enumerate or explain, concurred in restoring liberty and independence to the cities of Italy.[k] The acquisition of these roused industry, and gave motion and vigour to all the active powers of the human mind. Foreign commerce revived, navigation was attended to and improved. Constantinople became the chief mart to which the Italians resorted. There they not only met with a favourable reception, but obtained such mer-

[k] Hist. of Charles V. vol. i. p. 33.

cantile privileges as enabled them to carry on trade with great advantage. They were supplied both with the precious commodities of the East, and with many curious manufactures, the product of ancient arts and ingenuity which still subsisted among the Greeks. As the labour and expense of conveying the productions of India to Constantinople by that long and indirect course which I have described, rendered them extremely rare, and of an exorbitant price, the industry of the Italians discovered other methods of procuring them in greater abundance, and at an easier rate. They sometimes purchased them in Aleppo, Tripoli, and other ports on the coast of Syria, to which they were brought by a route not unknown to the ancients. They were conveyed from India by sea, up the Persian Gulf, and ascending the Euphrates and Tigris, as far as Bagdat, were carried by land across the desert of Palmyra, and from thence to the towns on the Mediterranean. But, from the length of the journey, and the dangers to which the caravans were exposed, this proved always a tedious, and often a precarious mode of conveyance. At length, the Soldans of Egypt, having revived the commerce with India in its ancient channel, by the Arabian Gulf, the Italian merchants, notwithstanding the violent antipathy to each

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other with which Christians and the followers of Mahomet were then possessed, repaired to Alexandria, and enduring, from the love of gain, the insolence and exactions of the Mahometans, established a lucrative trade in that port. From that period, the commercial spirit of Italy became active and enterprising. Venice, Genoa, Pisa, rose, from inconsiderable towns, to be populous and wealthy cities. Their naval power increased; their vessels frequented not only all the ports in the Mediterranean, but, venturing sometimes beyond the Streights, visited the maritime towns of Spain, France, the Low-Countries, and England; and, by distributing their commodities over Europe, began to communicate to its various nations some taste for the valuable productions of the East, as well as some ideas of manufactures and arts, which were then unknown beyond the precincts of Italy.

Their progress favoured by the Crusades;

WHILE the cities of Italy were thus advancing in their career of improvement, an event happened, the most extraordinary, perhaps, in the history of mankind, which, instead of retarding the commercial progress of the Italians, rendered it more rapid. The martial spirit of the Europeans, heightened and inflamed by religious zeal, prompted them to attempt the deliverance of the Holy Land

from the dominion of Infidels. Vast armies, composed of all the nations in Europe, marched towards Asia, upon this wild enterprise. The Genoese, the Pisans, and Venetians, furnished the transports which carried them thither. They supplied them with provisions and military stores. Besides the immense sums which they received on this account, they obtained commercial privileges and establishments, of great consequence in the settlements which the Crusaders made in Palestine, and in other provinces of Asia. From those sources, prodigious wealth flowed into the cities which I have mentioned. This was accompanied with a proportional increase of power; aad, by the end of the Holy War, Venice,in particular, became a great maritime state, possessing an extensive commerce, and ample territories.[1] Italy was not the only country in which the Crusades contributed to revive and diffuse such a spirit as prepared Europe for future discoveries. By their expeditions into Asia, the other European nations became well acquainted with remote regions, which formerly they knew only by name, or by the reports of ignorant and credulous pilgrims. They had an opportunity of observing the manners, the arts, and the

[1] Essai de l'Histoire du Commerce de Venise, p. 52, &c.

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accommodations of people more polished than themselves. This intercourse between the east and west subsisted almost two centuries. The adventurers who returned from Asia, communicated to their countrymen the ideas which they had acquired, and the habits of life they had contracted by visiting more refined nations. The Europeans began to be sensible of wants, with which they were formerly unacquainted: new desires were excited; and such a taste for the commodities and arts of other countries gradually spread among them, that they not only encouraged the resort of foreigners to their harbours, but began to perceive the advantage and necessity of applying to commerce themselves.[m]

by the discoveries of travellers by land.

THIS communication, which was opened between Europe and the western provinces of Asia, encouraged several persons to advance far beyond the countries in which the Crusaders carried on their operations, and to travel by land into the more remote and opulent regions of the east. The wild fanaticism, which seems, at that period, to have mingled in all the schemes of individuals, no less than in all the counsels of nations, first incited men to enter upon those long and dangerous

[m] Hist. of Charles V. vol. i. p. 25, &c.

peregrinations. They were afterwards undertaken from prospects of commercial advantage, or from motives of mere curiosity. Benjamin, a Jew of Tudela, in the kingdom of Navarre, possessed with a superstitious veneration for the law of Moses, and solicitous to visit his countrymen in the east, whom he hoped to find in such a state of power and opulence as might redound to the honour of his sect, set out from Spain in the year 1160, and travelling by land to Constantinople, proceeded through the countries to the north of the Euxine and Caspian seas, as far as Chinese Tartary. From thence he took his route towards the south, and after traversing various provinces of the farther India, he embarked on the Indian ocean, visited several of its islands, and returned at the end of thirteen years by the way of Egypt, to Europe, with much information concerning a large district of the globe, altogether unknown at that time to the western world.[n] The zeal of the head of the Christian church co-operated with the superstition of Benjamin the Jew, in discovering the interior and remote provinces of Asia. All Christendom having been alarmed with accounts of the rapid progress of the Tartar arms under Zengis Khan, Innocent IV., who 1246.

[n] Bergeron Recueil des Voyages, &c. tom. i. p. 1.

BOOK II. entertained most exalted ideas concerning the plenitude of his own power, and the submission due to his injunctions, sent Father John de Plano Carpini, at the head of a mission of Franciscan monks, and Father Ascolino, at the head of another of Dominicans, to enjoin Kayuk Khan, the grandson of Zengis, who was then at the head of the Tartar empire, to embrace the Christian faith, and to desist from desolating the earth by his arms. The haughty descendant of the greatest conqueror Asia had ever beheld, astonished at this strange mandate from an Italian priest, whose name and jurisdiction were alike unknown to him, received it with the contempt which it merited, though he dismissed the mendicants who delivered it with impunity. But, as they had penetrated into the country by different routes, and followed for some time the Tartar camps, which were always in motion, they had opportunity of visiting a great part of Asia. Carpini, who proceeded by the way of Poland and Russia, travelled through its northern provinces as far as the extremities of Thibet. Ascolino, who seems to have landed somewhere in Syria, advanced through its southern provinces, into the interior parts of Persia.[o]

[o] Hakluyt, i. 21. Bergeron, tom. i.

NOT long after, St. Louis of France contributed farther towards extending the knowledge which the Europeans had begun to acquire of those distant regions. Some designing impostor, who took advantage of the slender acquaintance of Christendom with the state and character of the Asiatic nations, having informed him that a powerful Khan of the Tartars had embraced the Christian faith, the monarch listened to the tale with pious credulity, and instantly resolved to send ambassadors to this illustrious convert, with a view of enticing him to attack their common enemy the Saracens in one quarter, while he fell upon them in another. As monks were the only persons in that age who possessed such a degree of knowledge as qualified them for a service of this kind, he employed in it Father Andrew, a Jacobine, who was followed by Father William de Rubruquis, a Franciscan. With respect to the progress of the former, there is no memorial extant. The journal of the latter has been published. He was admitted into the presence of Mangu, the third Khan in succession from Zengis, and made a circuit through the interior parts of Asia, more extensive than that of any European who had hitherto explored them.[p] 1253.

[p] Hakl. i. 71. Recueil des Voyages par Bergeron, tom. i.

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To those travellers, whom religious zeal sent forth to visit Asia, succeeded others who ventured into remote countries, from the prospect of commercial advantage, or from motives of mere curiosity. The first and most eminent of these was Marco Polo, a Venetian
1265. of a noble family. Having engaged early in trade, according to the custom of his country, his aspiring mind wished for a sphere of activity more extensive than was afforded to it by the established traffic carried on in those ports of Europe and Asia, which the Venetians frequented. This prompted him to travel into unknown countries, in expectation of opening a commercial intercourse with them, more suited to the sanguine ideas and hopes of a young adventurer.

As his father had already carried some European commodities to the court of the great Khan of the Tartars, and had disposed of them to advantage, he resorted thither. Under the protection of Kublay Khan, the most powerful of all the successors of Zengis, he continued his mercantile peregrinations in Asia upwards of twenty-six years; and, during that time, advanced towards the east, far beyond the utmost boundaries to which any European traveller had ever proceeded. Instead of following the course of Carpini and Rubruquis, along the vast un-

peopled plains of Tartary, he passed through the chief trading cities in the more cultivated parts of Asia, and penetrated to Cambalu, or Peking, the capital of the great kingdom of Cathay, or China, subject at that time to the successors of Zengis. He made more than one voyage on the Indian ocean; he traded in many of the islands, from which Europe had long received spiceries and other commodities, which it held in high estimation, though unacquainted with the particular countries to which it was indebted for those precious productions; and he obtained information concerning several countries, which he did not visit in person, particularly the island Zipangri, probably the same now known by the name of Japan.[q] On his return, he astonished his contemporaries with his descriptions of vast regions, whose names had never been heard of in Europe, and with such pompous accounts of their fertility, their populousness, their opulence, the variety of their manufactures, and the extent of their trade, as rose far above the conception of an uninformed age.

About half a century after Marco Polo, Sir John Mandeville, an Englishman, encouraged 1322.

[q] Viaggi di Marco Polo. Ramus. ii. 2. Bergeron, tom. ii.

BOOK I. by his example, visited most of the countries in the east which he had described, and, like him, published an account of them.[r] The narrations of those early travellers abound with many wild incoherent tales, concerning giants, enchanters, and monsters. But they were not, from that circumstance, less acceptable to an ignorant age, which delighted in what was marvellous. The wonders which they told, mostly on hearsay, filled the multitude with admiration. The facts which they related from their own observation attracted the attention of the more discerning. The former, which may be considered as the popular traditions and fables of the countries through which they had passed, were gradually disregarded as Europe advanced in knowledge. The latter, however incredible some of them may have appeared in their own time, have been confirmed by the observations of modern travellers. By means of both, however, the curiosity of mankind was excited with respect to the remote parts of the earth, their ideas were enlarged, and they were not only insensibly disposed to attempt new discoveries, but received such information as directed to that particular course in which these were afterwards carried on.

[r] Voyages and Travels, by Sir John Mandeville.

and by the invention of the mariner's compass.

WHILE this spirit was gradually forming in Europe, a fortunate discovery was made, which contributed more than all the efforts and ingenuity of preceding ages, to improve and to extend navigation. That wonderful property of the magnet, by which it communicates such virtue to a needle or slender rod of iron, as to point towards the poles of the earth, was observed. The use which might be made of this in directing navigation was immediately perceived. That valuable, but now familiar instrument, the *mariner's compass*, was constructed. When, by means of it, navigators found that, at all seasons, and in every place, they could discover the north and south with so much ease and accuracy, it became no longer necessary to depend merely on the light of the stars and the observation of the sea-coast. They gradually abandoned their ancient timid and lingering course along the shore, ventured boldly into the ocean, and, relying on this new guide, could steer in the darkest night, and under the most cloudy sky, with a security and precision hitherto unknown. The compass may be said to have opened to man the dominion of the sea, and to have put him in full possession of the earth, by enabling him to visit every part of it. Flavio Gioia, a citizen of Amalfi, a town of considerable trade in the kingdom of Naples,

BOOK I. was the author of this great discovery, about the year one thousand three hundred and two. It hath been often the fate of those illustrious benefactors of mankind, who have enriched science and improved the arts by their inventions, to derive more reputation than benefit from the happy efforts of their genius. But the lot of Gioia has been still more cruel; through the inattention or ignorance of contemporary historians, he has been defrauded even of the fame to which he had such a just title. We receive from them no information with respect to his profession, his character, the precise time when he made this important discovery, or the accidents and enquiries which led to it. The knowledge of this event, though productive of greater effects than any recorded in the annals of the human race, is transmitted to us without any of those circumstances which can gratify the curiosity that it naturally awakens.[1] But though the use of the compass might enable the Italians to perform the short voyages to which they were accustomed, with greater security and expedition, its influence was not so sudden or extensive, as immediately to render navigation adventurous, and to excite a spirit of discovery. Many causes combined in preventing this be-

[1] Collinas & Trombellus de Acus nauticæ Inventore. Instit. Acad. Bonon. tom. ii. part iii. p. 372.

neficial invention from producing its full effect instantaneously. Men relinquish ancient habits slowly, and with reluctance. They are averse to new experiments, and venture upon them with timidity. The commercial jealousy of the Italians, it is probable, laboured to conceal the happy discovery of their countrymen from other nations. The art of steering by the compass with such skill and accuracy as to inspire a full confidence in its direction, was acquired gradually. Sailors, unaccustomed to quit sight of land, durst not launch out at once and commit themselves to unknown seas. Accordingly, near half a century elapsed from the time of Gioia's discovery, before navigators ventured into any seas which they had not been accustomed to frequent.

Some appearance of a bolder spirit in navigation.

THE first appearance of a bolder spirit may be dated from the voyages of the Spaniards to the Canary or Fortunate Islands. By what accident they were led to the discovery of those small isles, which lie near five hundred miles from the Spanish coast, and above a hundred and fifty miles from the coast of Africa, contemporary writers have not explained. But, about the middle of the fourteenth century, the people of all the different kingdoms into which Spain was then divided, were

BOOK I. accustomed to make piratical excursions thither, in order to plunder the inhabitants, or to carry them off as slaves. Clement VI., in virtue of the right claimed by the Holy See, to dispose of all countries possessed by infidels, erected those isles into a kingdom, in the year one thousand three hundred and forty-four, and conferred it on Lewis de la Cerda, descended from the royal family of Castile. But that unfortunate Prince, destitute of power to assert his nominal title, having never visited the Canaries, John de Bethencourt, a Norman baron, obtained a grant of them from Henry III. of Castile.[1] Bethencourt, with the valour and good fortune which distinguished the adventurers of his country, attempted and effected the conquest; and the possession of the Canaries remained for some time in his family, as a fief held of the crown of Castile. Previous to this expedition of Bethencourt, his countrymen settled in Normandy are said to have visited the coast of Africa, and to
1365. have proceeded far to the south of the Canary Islands. But their voyages thither seem not to have been undertaken in consequence of any public or regular plan for extending navigation and attempting new discoveries. They were either excursions suggested by that

[1] Viera y Clavijo Notic. de la Histor. de Canaria, I. 268, &c. Glas. Hist. c. 1.

roving piratical spirit, which descended to the Normans from their ancestors, or the commercial enterprises of private merchants, which attracted so little notice, that hardly any memorial of them is to be found in contemporary authors. In a general survey of the progress of discovery, it is sufficient to have mentioned this event; and leaving it among those of dubious existence, or of small importance, we may conclude, that though much additional information concerning the remote regions of the East had been received by travellers who visited them by land, navigation, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, had not advanced beyond the state to which it had attained before the downfal of the Roman empire.

First regular plan of discovery,

At length the period arrived, when Providence decreed that men were to pass the limits within which they had been so long confined, and open to themselves a more ample field wherein to display their talents, their enterprise and courage. The first considerable efforts towards this were not made by any of the more powerful states of Europe, or by those who had applied to navigation with the greatest assiduity and success. The glory of leading the way in this new career, was reserved for Portugal, one of the smallest and

formed by the Portuguese.

BOOK I.

least powerful of the European kingdoms. As the attempts of the Portuguese to acquire the knowledge of those parts of the globe with which mankind were then unacquainted, not only improved and extended the art of navigation, but roused such a spirit of curiosity and enterprise, as led to the discovery of the the New World, of which I propose to write the history, it is necessary to take a full view of the rise, the progress, and success of their various naval operations. It was in this school that the discoverer of America was trained; and unless we trace the steps by which his instructors and guides advanced, it will be impossible to comprehend the circumstances which suggested the idea, or facilitated the execution of his great design.

Circumstances which led to this.

VARIOUS circumstances prompted the Portuguese to exert their activity in this new direction, and enabled them to accomplish undertakings apparently superior to the natural force of their monarchy. The Kings of Portugal, having driven the Moors out of their dominions, had acquired power, as well as glory, by the success of their arms against the infidels. By their victories over them, they had extended the royal authority beyond the narrow limits within which it was originally circumscribed in Portugal, as well as in other feudal king-

doms. They had the command of the national force, could rouse it to act with united vigour, and, after the expulsion of the Moors, could employ it without dread of interruption from any domestic enemy. By the perpetual hostilities carried on for several centuries against the Mahometans, the martial and adventurous spirit which distinguished all the European nations during the middle ages, was improved and heightened among the Portuguese. A fierce civil war towards the close of the fourteenth century, occasioned by a disputed succession, augmented the military ardour of the nation, and formed or called forth men of such active and daring genius, as are fit for bold undertakings. The situation of the kingdom, bounded on every side by the dominions of a more powerful neighbour, did not afford free scope to the activity of the Portuguese by land, as the strength of their monarchy was no match for that of Castile. But Portugal was a maritime state, in which there were many commodious harbours; the people had begun to make some progress in the knowledge and practice of navigation; and the sea was open to them, presenting the only field of enterprise in which they could distinguish themselves.

First attempt.

Such was the state of Portugal, and such the disposition of the people, when John I., sur-

BOOK I. named the Bastard, obtained secure possession of the crown by the peace concluded with Castile, in the year one thousand four hundred and eleven. He was a Prince of great merit, who, by superior courage and abilities, had opened his way to a throne, which of right did not belong to him. He instantly perceived that it would be impossible to preserve public order, or domestic tranquillity, without finding some employment for the restless spirit of his subjects. With this view he assembled a numerous fleet at Lisbon, composed of all the ships which he could fit out in his own kingdom, and of
1412. many hired from foreigners. This great armament was destined to attack the Moors settled on the coast of Barbary. While it was equipping, a few vessels were appointed to sail along the western shore of Africa bounded by the Atlantic ocean, and to discover the unknown countries situated there. From this inconsiderable attempt, we may date the commencement of that spirit of discovery, which opened the barriers that had so long shut out mankind from the knowledge of one half of the terrestrial globe.

At the time when John sent forth these ships on this new voyage, the art of navigation was still very imperfect. Though Africa lay so near to Portugal, and the fertility of the countries

already known on that continent invited men to explore it more fully, the Portuguese had never ventured to sail beyond Cape *Non*. That promontory, as its name imports, was hitherto considered as a boundary which could not be passed. But the nations of Europe had now acquired as much knowledge, as imboldened them to disregard the prejudices and to correct the errors of their ancestors. The long reign of ignorance, the constant enemy of every curious inquiry, and of every new undertaking, was approaching to its period. The light of science began to dawn. The works of the ancient Greeks and Romans began to be read with admiration and profit. The sciences cultivated by the Arabians were introduced into Europe by the Moors settled in Spain and Portugal, and by the Jews, who were very numerous in both these kingdoms. Geometry, astronomy, and geography, the sciences on which the art of navigation is founded, became objects of studious attention. The memory of the discoveries made by the ancients was revived, and the progress of their navigation and commerce began to be traced. Some of the causes which have obstructed the cultivation of science in Portugal, during this century and the last, did not exist, or did not operate in the same manner, in the fifteenth century[t]; and the Portuguese,

BOOK I

[t] See NOTE IX.

BOOK I. at that period, seem to have kept pace with other nations on this side of the Alps in literary pursuits.

Its success. As the genius of the age favoured the execution of that new undertaking, to which the peculiar state of the country invited the Portuguese, it proved successful. The vessels sent on the discovery doubled that formidable Cape, which had terminated the progress of former navigators, and proceeded a hundred and sixty miles beyond it, to Cape Bojador. As its rocky cliffs, which stretched a considerable way into the Atlantic, appeared more dreadful than the promontory which they had passed, the Portuguese commanders durst not attempt to sail round it, but returned to Lisbon, more satisfied with having advanced so far, than ashamed of having ventured no farther.

Prince Henry the director of the Portuguese discoveries. INCONSIDERABLE as this voyage was, it increased the passion for discovery, which began to arise in Portugal. The fortunate issue of the King's expedition against the Moors of
1417. Barbary, added strength to that spirit in the nation, and pushed it on to new undertakings. In order to render these successful, it was necessary that they should be conducted by a person who possessed abilities capable of discerning what was attainable, who enjoyed leisure to form a regular system for prosecuting discovery, and

who was animated with ardour that would persevere in spite of obstacles and repulses. Happily for Portugal, she found all those qualities in Henry Duke of Viseo, the fourth son of King John by Philippa of Lancaster, sister of Henry IV. King of England. That Prince, in his early youth, having accompanied his father in his expedition to Barbary, distinguished himself by many deeds of valour. To the martial spirit, which was the characteristic of every man of noble birth at that time, he added all the accomplishments of a more enlightened and polished age. He cultivated the arts and sciences, which were then unknown and despised by persons of his rank. He applied with peculiar fondness to the study of geography; and by the instruction of able masters, as well as by the accounts of travellers, he early acquired such knowledge of the habitable globe, as discovered the great probability of finding new and opulent countries, by sailing along the coast of Africa. Such an object was formed to awaken the enthusiasm and ardour of a youthful mind, and he espoused with the utmost zeal the patronage of a design which might prove as beneficial, as it appeared to be splendid and honourable. In order that he might pursue this great scheme without interruption, he retired from court immediately

BOOK I. after his return from Africa, and fixed his residence at Sagres, near Cape St. Vincent, where the prospect of the Atlantic ocean invited his thoughts continually towards his favourite project, and encouraged him to execute it. In this retreat he was attended by some of the most learned men in his country, who aided him in his researches. He applied for information to the Moors of Barbary, who were accustomed to travel by land into the interior provinces of Africa, in quest of ivory, gold-dust, and other rich commodities. He consulted the Jews settled in Portugal. By promises, rewards, and marks of respect, he allured into his service several persons, foreigners as well as Portuguese, who were eminent for their skill in navigation. In taking those preparatory steps, the great abilities of the Prince were seconded by his private virtues. His integrity, his affability, his respect for religion, his zeal for the honour of his country, engaged persons of all ranks to applaud his design, and to favour the execution of it. His schemes were allowed, by the greater part of his countrymen, to proceed neither from ambition nor the desire of wealth, but to flow from the warm benevolence of a heart eager to promote the happiness of mankind, and which justly entitled him to assume a motto for his device, that described the qua-

lity by which he wished to be distinguished, *the talent of doing good.* BOOK I.

Discovery of Porto Santo. 1418.

His first effort, as is usual at the commencement of any new undertaking, was extremely inconsiderable. He fitted out a single ship, and giving the command of it to John Gonzales Zarco and Tristan Vaz, two gentlemen of his household, who voluntarily offered to conduct the enterprise, he instructed them to use their utmost efforts to double Cape Bojador, and thence to steer towards the south. They, according to the mode of navigation which still prevailed, held their course along the shore; and by following that direction, they must have encountered almost insuperable difficulties in attempting to pass Cape Bojador. But fortune came in aid to their want of skill, and prevented the voyage from being altogether fruitless. A sudden squall of wind arose, drove them out to sea, and when they expected every moment to perish, landed them on an unknown island, which from their happy escape they named *Porto Santo.* In the infancy of navigation, the discovery of this small island appeared a matter of such moment, that they instantly returned to Portugal with the good tidings, and were received by Henry with the applause and honour due to fortunate adventurers. This faint dawn of success

BOOK I. filled a mind ardent in the pursuit of a favourite object with such sanguine hopes as were sufficient incitements to proceed. Next year Henry sent out three ships under the same commanders, to whom he joined Bartholomew Perestrello, in order to take possession of the island which they had discovered. When they began to settle in Porto Santo, they observed towards the south a fixed spot in the horizon like a small black cloud. By degrees, they were led to conjecture that it might be land, and steering towards it, they arrived at a considerable island, uninhabited and covered with wood, which on that account they called *Madeira.*[u] At it was Henry's chief object to render his discoveries useful to his country, he immediately equipped a fleet to carry a colony of Portuguese to these islands. By his provident care, they were furnished not only with the seeds, plants, and domestic animals common in Europe; but as he foresaw that the warmth of the climate and fertility of the soil would prove favourable to the rearing of other productions, he procured slips of the vine from the island of Cyprus, the rich wines of which were then in great request, and plants of the sugar-cane from Sicily, into which

1419. Of Madeira. 1420.

[u] Historical Relation of the first Discovery of Madeira, translated from the Portuguese of Fran. Alcafarana, p. 15, &c.

it had been lately introduced. These throve so prosperously in this new country, that the benefit of cultivating them was immediately perceived, and the sugar and wine of Madeira quickly became articles of some consequence in the commerce of Portugal.[x]

As soon as the advantages derived from this first settlement to the west of the European continent began to be felt, the spirit of discovery appeared less chimerical, and became more adventurous. By their voyages to Madeira, the Portuguese were gradually accustomed to a bolder navigation, and, instead of creeping servilely along the coast, ventured into the open sea. In consequence of taking this course, Gilianez, who commanded one of Prince Henry's ships, doubled Cape Bojador, the boundary of the Portuguese navigation upwards of twenty years, and which had hitherto been deemed unpassable. This successful voyage, which the ignorance of the age placed on a level with the most famous exploits recorded in history, opened a new sphere to navigation, as it discovered the vast continent of Africa, still washed by the Atlantic ocean, and stretching towards the south. Part of this was soon ex-

Double Cape Bojador.

1433.

[x] Lud. Guicciardini Descritt. de Paesi Bassi, p. 180, 181.

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plored; the Portuguese advanced within the tropics, and in the space of a few years they discovered the river Senegal, and all the coast extending from Cape Blanco to Cape de Verd.

Advance within the tropics.

Astonished at what they discovered there.

HITHERTO the Portuguese had been guided in their discoveries, or encouraged to attempt them, by the light and information which they received from the works of the ancient mathematicians and geographers. But when they began to enter the torrid zone, the notion which prevailed among the ancients, that the heat, which reigned perpetually there, was so excessive as to render it uninhabitable, deterred them, for some time, from proceeding. Their own observations, when they first ventured into this unknown and formidable region, tended to confirm the opinion of antiquity concerning the violent operation of the direct rays of the sun. As far as the river Senegal, the Portuguese had found the coast of Africa inhabited by people nearly resembling the Moors of Barbary. When they advanced to the south of that river, the human form seemed to put on a new appearance. They beheld men with skins black as ebony, with short curled hair, flat noses, thick lips, and all the peculiar features which are now known to distinguish the race of negroes. This surprising alteration they naturally attributed to

the influence of heat, and if they should advance nearer to the line, they began to dread that its effects would be still more violent. Those dangers were exaggerated; and many other objections against attempting farther discoveries were proposed by some of the grandees, who, from ignorance, from envy, or from that cold timid prudence which rejects whatever has the air of novelty or enterprise, had hitherto condemned all Prince Henry's schemes. They represented, that it was altogether chimerical to expect any advantage from countries situated in that region which the wisdom and experience of antiquity had pronounced to be unfit for the habitation of men; that their forefathers, satisfied with cultivating the territory which Providence had allotted them, did not waste the strength of the kingdom by fruitless projects, in quest of new settlements; that Portugal was already exhausted by the expense of attempts to discover lands which either did not exist, or which nature destined to remain unknown; and was drained of men, who might have been employed in undertakings attended with more certain success, and productive of greater benefit. But neither their appeal to the authority of the ancients, nor their reasonings concerning the interests of Portugal, made any impression upon the determined philosophic

BOOK I.

mind of Prince Henry. The discoveries which he had already made convinced him that the ancients had little more than a conjectural knowledge of the torrid zone. He was no less satisfied that the political arguments of his opponents, with respect to the interest of Portugal, were malevolent and ill-founded. In those sentiments he was strenuously supported by his brother Pedro, who governed the kingdom as guardian of their nephew Alphonso V., who had succeeded to the throne during his minority; and, instead of slackening his efforts, Henry continued to pursue his discoveries with fresh ardour.

1438.

Papal grant to Portugal of what countries it should discover.

But, in order to silence all the murmurs of opposition, he endeavoured to obtain the sanction of the highest authority in favour of his operations. With this view he applied to the Pope, and represented, in pompous terms, the pious and unwearied zeal with which he had exerted himself during twenty years, in discovering unknown countries, the wretched inhabitants of which were utter strangers to true religion, wandering in heathen darkness, or led astray by the delusions of Mahomet. He besought the holy father, to whom, as the vicar of Christ, all the kingdoms of the earth were subject, to confer on the crown of Portugal a right to all the countries possessed by infidels,

which should be discovered by the industry of its subjects, and subdued by the force of its arms. He entreated him to enjoin all Christian powers, under the highest penalties, not to molest Portugal while engaged in this laudable enterprise, and to prohibit them from settling in any of the countries which the Portuguese should discover. He promised that, in all their expeditions, it should be the chief object of his countrymen to spread the knowledge of the Christian religion, to establish the authority of the Holy See, and to increase the flock of the universal pastor. As it was by improving with dexterity every favourable conjuncture for acquiring new powers, that the court of Rome had gradually extended its usurpations, Eugene IV., the Pontiff to whom this application was made, eagerly seized the opportunity which now presented itself. He instantly perceived, that, by complying with Prince Henry's request, he might exercise a prerogative no less flattering in its own nature, than likely to prove beneficial in its consequences. A bull was accordingly issued, in which, after applauding in the strongest terms the past efforts of the Portuguese, and exhorting them to proceed in that laudable career on which they had entered, he granted them an exclusive right to all the countries which they should discover, from Cape Non to the continent of India.

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EXTRAVAGANT as this donation, comprehending such a large portion of the habitable globe, would now appear, even in Catholic countries, no person in the fifteenth century doubted that the Pope, in the plenitude of his apostolic power, had a right to confer it. Prince Henry was soon sensible of the advantages which he derived from this transaction. His schemes were authorised and sanctified by the bull approving of them. The spirit of discovery was connected with zeal for religion, which, in that age, was a principle of such activity and vigour, as to influence the conduct of nations. All Christian Princes were deterred from intruding into those countries which the Portuguese had discovered, or from interrupting the progress of their navigation and conquests.[7]

Fame and progress of the Portuguese discoveries.

THE fame of the Portuguese voyages soon spread over Europe. Men long accustomed to circumscribe the activity and knowledge of the human mind within the limits to which they had been hitherto confined, were astonished to behold the sphere of navigation so suddenly enlarged, and a prospect opened of visiting regions of the globe, the existence of which was unknown in former times. The learned and

[7] See NOTE X.

speculative reasoned and formed theories concerning those unexpected discoveries. The vulgar inquired and wondered; while enterprising adventurers crowded from every part of Europe, soliciting Prince Henry to employ them in this honourable service. Many Venetians and Genoese, in particular, who were, at that time, superior to all other nations in the science of naval affairs, entered aboard the Portuguese ships, and acquired a more perfect and extensive knowledge of their profession in that new school of navigation. In emulation of these foreigners, the Portuguese exerted their own talents. The nation seconded the designs of the Prince. Private merchants 1466. formed companies, with a view to search for unknown countries. The Cape de Verd islands, which lie off the promontory of that name, were discovered, and soon after the isles called 1449. Azores. As the former of these are above three hundred miles from the African coast, and the latter nine hundred miles from any continent, it is evident, by their venturing so boldly into the open seas, that the Portuguese had, by this time, improved greatly in the art of navigation.

Death of Prince Henry. 1463.

While the passion for engaging in new undertakings was thus warm and active, it received an unfortunate check by the death of

BOOK I.

Prince Henry, whose superior knowledge had hitherto directed all the operations of the discoverers, and whose patronage had encouraged and protected them. But notwithstanding all the advantages which they derived from these, the Portuguese, during his life, did not advance in their utmost progress towards the south, within five degrees of the equinoctial line; and after their continued exertions for half a century, hardly fifteen hundred miles of the coast of Africa were discovered. To an age acquainted with the efforts of navigation in its state of maturity and improvement, those essays of its early years must necessarily appear feeble and unskilful. But inconsiderable as they may be deemed, they were sufficient to turn the curiosity of the European nations into a new channel, to excite an enterprising spirit, and to point the way to future discoveries.

From 1412 to 1463.

The passion for discovery languishes for some time.

Alphonso, who possessed the throne of Portugal at the time of Prince Henry's death, was so much engaged in supporting his own pretensions to the crown of Castile, or in carrying on his expeditions against the Moors in Barbary, that the force of his kingdom being exerted in other operations, he could not prosecute the discoveries in Africa with ardour. He committed the conduct of them to Fernando Gomez, a merchant in Lisbon, to whom he granted an

exclusive right of commerce with all the countries of which Prince Henry had taken possession. Under the restraint and oppression of a monopoly, the spirit of discovery languished. It ceased to be a national object, and became the concern of a private man, more attentive to his own gain, than to the glory of his country. Some progress, however was made. The Portuguese ventured at 1471.
length to cross the line, and, to their astonishment, found that region of the torrid zone, which was supposed to be scorched with intolerable heat, to be not only habitable, but populous and fertile.

1481. Revives with additional ardour.

JOHN II., who succeeded his father Alphonso, possessed talents capable both of forming and executing great designs. As part of his revenues, while Prince, had arisen from duties on the trade with the newly-discovered countries, this naturally turned his attention towards them, and satisfied him with respect to their utility and importance. In proportion as his knowledge of these countries extended, the possession of them appeared to be of greater consequence. While the Portuguese proceeded along the coast of Africa, from Cape Non to the river of Senegal, they found all that extensive tract to be sandy, barren, and thinly inhabited by a wretched people, pro-

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fessing the Mahometan religion, and subject to the vast empire of Morocco. But to the south of that river, the power and religion of the Mahometans were unknown. The country was divided into small independent principalities, the population was considerable, the soil fertile[z], and the Portuguese soon discovered that it produced ivory, rich gums, gold, and other valuable commodities. By the acquisition of these, commerce was enlarged, and became more adventurous. Men, animated and rendered active by the certain prospect of gain, pursued discovery with greater eagerness, than when they were excited only by curiosity and hope.

Its progress.

THIS spirit derived no small reinforcement of vigour from the countenance of such a monarch as John. Declaring himself the patron of every attempt towards discovery, he promoted it with all the ardour of his grand-uncle Prince Henry, and with superior power. The effects of this were immediately felt. A
1484. powerful fleet was fitted out, which, after discovering the kingdoms of Benin and Congo, advanced above fifteen hundred miles beyond

[z] Navigatio Aloysii Cadamusti apud Novum Orbem Grynæi, p. 2. 18. Navigat. all Isola di San Tome per un Pilotto Portugh. Ramusio, i. 115.

the line, and the Portuguese, for the first time, beheld a new heaven, and observed the stars of another hemisphere. John was not only solicitous to discover, but attentive to secure the possession of those countries. He built forts on the coast of Guinea; he sent out colonies to settle there; he established a commercial intercourse with the more powerful kingdoms; he endeavoured to render such as were feeble or divided tributary to the crown of Portugal. Some of the petty princes voluntarily acknowledged themselves his vassals. Others were compelled to do so by force of arms. A regular and well-digested system was formed with respect to this new object of policy, and by firmly adhering to it, the Portuguese power and commerce in Africa were established upon a solid foundation.

Hopes of discovering a new route to the East Indies.

By their constant intercourse with the people of Africa, the Portuguese gradually acquired some knowledge of those parts of that country which they had not visited. The information which they received from the natives, added to what they had observed in their own voyages, began to open prospects more extensive, and to suggest the idea of schemes more important, than those which had hitherto allured and occupied them. They had detected the error of the

BOOK I.

ancients concerning the nature of the torrid zone. They found as they proceeded southwards, that the continent of Africa, instead of extending in breadth, according to the doctrine of Ptolemy[a], at that time the oracle and guide of the learned in the science of geography, appeared sensibly to contract itself, and to bend towards the east. This induced them to give credit to the accounts of the ancient Phenician voyages round Africa, which had long been deemed fabulous, and led them to conceive hopes that, by following the same route, they might arrive at the East-Indies, and engross that commerce which has been the source of wealth and power to every nation possessed of it. The comprehensive genius of Prince Henry, as we may conjecture from the words of the Pope's bull, had early formed some idea of this navigation. But though his countrymen, at that period, were incapable of conceiving the extent of his views and schemes, all the Portuguese mathematicians and pilots now concurred in representing them as well-founded and practicable. The King entered with warmth into their sentiments, and began to concert measures for this arduous and important voyage.

[a] Vide Nov. Orbis Tabul. Geograph. secund. Ptolem. Amst. 1730.

Schemes for accomplishing this.

BEFORE his preparations for this expedition were finished, accounts were transmitted from Africa, that various nations along the coast had mentioned a mighty kingdom situated on their continent, at a great distance towards the East, the King of which, according to their description, professed the Christian religion. The Portuguese Monarch immediately concluded, that this must be the Emperor of Abyssinia, to whom the Europeans, seduced by a mistake of Rubruquis, Marco Polo, and other travellers to the East, absurdly gave the name of Prester or Presbyter John; and, as he hoped to receive information and assistance from a Christian Prince, in prosecuting a scheme that tended to propagate their common faith, he resolved to open, if possible, some intercourse with his court. With this view, he made choice of Pedro de Covillam and Alphonso de Payva, who were perfect masters of the Arabic language, and sent them into the East to search for the residence of this unknown potentate, and to make him proffers of friendship. They had in charge likewise to procure whatever intelligence the nations which they visited could supply, with respect to the trade of India, and the course of navigation to that continent.[b]

[b] Faria y Sousa Port. Asia. vol. i. p. 26. Lasitau Decouv. de Port. i. 46.

BOOK I.

Voyage of Bartholomew Diaz. 1486.

WHILE John made this new attempt by land, to obtain some knowledge of the country which he wished so ardently to discover, he did not neglect the prosecution of this great design by sea. The conduct of a voyage for this purpose, the most arduous and important which the Portuguese had ever projected, was committed to Bartholomew Diaz, an officer whose sagacity, experience, and fortitude rendered him equal to the undertaking. He stretched boldly towards the south, and, proceeding beyond the utmost limits to which his countrymen had hitherto advanced, discovered near a thousand miles of new country. Neither the danger to which he was exposed, by a succession of violent tempests in unknown seas, and by the frequent mutinies of his crew, nor the calamities of famine which he suffered from losing his store-ship, could deter him from prosecuting his enterprise. In recompense of his labours and perseverance, he at last descried that lofty promontory which bounds Africa to the south. But to descry it was all that he had in his power to accomplish. The violence of the winds, the shattered condition of his ships, and the turbulent spirit of the sailors, compelled him to return after a voyage of sixteen months, in which he discovered a far greater extent of country than any former navigator. Diaz had called the

promontory which terminated his voyage, BOOK I.
Cabo Tormentoso, or the Stormy Cape; but the King, his master, as he now entertained no doubt of having found the long-desired route to India, gave it a name more inviting, and of better omen, *The Cape of Good Hope.*[c]

More certain prospects of success.

THOSE sanguine expectations of success were confirmed by the intelligence which John received over land, in consequence of his embassy to Abyssinia. Covillam and Payva, in obedience to their master's instructions, had repaired to Grand Cairo. From that city they travelled along with a caravan of Egyptian merchants, and, embarking on the Red Sea, arrived at Aden in Arabia. There they separated; Payva sailed directly towards Abyssinia; Covillam embarked for the East-Indies, and, having visited Calecut, Goa, and other cities on the Malabar coast, returned to Sofala, on the east side of Africa, and thence to Grand Cairo, which Payva and he had fixed upon as their place of rendezvous. Unfortunately the former was cruelly murdered in Abyssinia, but Covillam found at Cairo two Portuguese Jews, whom John, whose provident sagacity attended to every circumstance that could facilitate the execu-

[c] Faria y Sousa Port. Asia, vol. i. p. 26.

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tion of his schemes, had dispatched after them, in order to receive a detail of their proceedings, and to communicate to them new instructions. By one of these Jews, Covillam transmitted to Portugal a journal of his travels by sea and land, his remarks upon the trade of India, together with exact maps of the coasts on which he had touched; and from what he himself had observed, as well as from the information of skilful seamen in different countries, he concluded, that, by sailing round Africa, a passage might be found to the East-Indies.[d]

Preparations for another voyage.

THE happy coincidence of Covillam's opinion and report, with the discoveries which Diaz had lately made, left hardly any shadow of doubt with respect to the possibility of sailing from Europe to India. But the vast length of the voyage, and the furious storms which Diaz had encountered near the Cape of Good Hope, alarmed and intimidated the Portuguese to such a degree, although by long experience they were now become adventurous and skilful mariners, that some time was requisite to prepare their minds for this dangerous and extraordinary voyage. The courage, however, and authority

[d] Faria y Sousa Port. Asia, vol. i. p. 27. Lasitau Decouv. i. 48.

of the monarch, gradually dispelled the vain fears of his subjects or made it necessary to conceal them. As John thought himself now upon the eve of accomplishing that great design, which had been the principal object of his reign, his earnestness in prosecuting it became so vehement, that it occupied his thoughts by day, and bereaved him of sleep through the night. While he was taking every precaution that his wisdom and experience could suggest, in order to insure the success of the expedition, which was to decide concerning the fate of his favourite project, the fame of the vast discoveries which the Portuguese had already made, the reports concerning the extraordinary intelligence which they had received from the East, and the prospect of the voyage which they now meditated, drew the attention of all the European nations, and held them in suspense and expectation. By some, the maritime skill and navigations of the Portuguese were compared with those of the Phenicians and Carthaginians, and exalted above them. Others formed conjectures concerning the revolutions which the success of the Portuguese schemes might occasion in the course of trade, and the political state of Europe. The Venetians began to be disquieted with the apprehension

The attention of mankind fixed upon it.

BOOK I.

of losing their Indian commerce, the monopoly of which was the chief source of their power as well as opulence, and the Portuguese already enjoyed in fancy the wealth of the East. But, during this interval, which gave such scope to the various workings of curiosity, of hope, and of fear, an account was brought to Europe of an event no less extraordinary than unexpected, the discovery of a New World situated in the West; and the eyes and admiration of mankind turned immediately towards that great object.

suddenly turned to a new object.

THE

HISTORY

OF

AMERICA.

BOOK II.

BOOK II.

Birth and education of Columbus.

AMONG the foreigners whom the fame of the discoveries made by the Portuguese had allured into their service, was Christopher Colon, or Columbus, a subject of the republic of Genoa. Neither the time nor place of his birth are known with certainty;[a] but he was descended of an honourable family, though reduced to indigence by various misfortunes. His ancestors having betaken themselves for subsistence to a sea-faring life, Columbus discovered in his early youth the peculiar character and talents which mark out a man for that profession. His parents, instead of thwarting this original propensity of his mind, seem to have encouraged and confirmed it, by the education which they gave him. After ac-

[a] See NOTE XI.

BOOK II.

quiring some knowledge of the Latin tongue, the only language in which science was taught at that time, he was instructed in geometry, cosmography, astronomy, and the art of drawing. To these he applied with such ardour and predilection, on account of their connection with navigation, his favourite object, that he advanced with rapid proficiency in the study
1461. of them. Thus qualified, he went to sea at the age of fourteen, and began his career on that element which conducted him to so much glory. His early voyages were to those ports in the Mediterranean which his countrymen the Genoese frequented. This being a sphere
1467. too narrow for his active mind, he made an excursion to the northern seas, and visited the coasts of Iceland, to which the English and other nations had begun to resort on account of its fishery. As navigation, in every direction, was now become enterprising, he proceeded beyond that island, the Thule of the ancients, and advanced several degrees within the polar circle. Having satisfied his curiosity, by a voyage which tended more to enlarge his knowledge of naval affairs, than to improve his fortune, he entered into the service of a famous sea-captain, of his own name and family. This man commanded a small squadron fitted out at his own expense, and by cruising sometimes against the Mahometans,

sometimes against the Venetians, the rivals of his country in trade, had acquired both wealth and reputation. With him Columbus continued for several years, no less distinguished for his courage, than for his experience as a sailor. At length, in an obstinate engagement off the coast of Portugal, with some Venetian caravals, returning richly laden from the Low-Countries, the vessel on board which he served took fire, together with one of the enemy's ships, to which it was fast grappled. In this dreadful extremity his intrepidity and presence of mind did not forsake him. He threw himself into the sea, laid hold of a floating oar, and by the support of it, and his dexterity in swimming, he reached the shore, though above two leagues distant, and saved a life reserved for great undertakings.[b]

He enters into the Portuguese service.

As soon as he recovered strength for the journey, he repaired to Lisbon, where many of his countrymen were settled. They soon conceived such a favourable opinion of his merit, as well as talents, that they warmly solicited him to remain in that kingdom, where his naval skill and experience could not fail of rendering him conspicuous. To every adventurer, animated either with curiosity to visit new coun-

[b] Life of Columbus, c. v.

BOOK II.

tries, or with ambition to distinguish himself, the Portuguese service was at that time extremely inviting. Columbus listened with a favourable ear to the advice of his friends, and having gained the esteem of a Portuguese lady, whom he married, fixed his residence in Lisbon. This alliance, instead of detaching him from a sea-faring life, contributed to enlarge the sphere of his naval knowledge, and to excite a desire of extending it still farther. His wife was a daughter of Bartholomew Perestrello, one of the captains employed by Prince Henry in his early navigations, and who, under his protection, had discovered and planted the islands of Porto Santo and Madeira. Columbus got possession of the journals and charts of this experienced navigator, and from them he learned the course which the Portuguese had held in making their discoveries, as well as the various circumstances which guided or encouraged them in their attempts. The study of these soothed and inflamed his favourite passion; and while he contemplated the maps, and read the descriptions of the new countries which Perestrello had seen, his impatience to visit them became irresistible. In order to indulge it, he made a voyage to Madeira, and continued during several years to trade with that island, with the Canaries, the Azores, the settlements in Guinea, and all the other places which the

Portuguese had discovered on the continent of Africa.[e] BOOK II.

The effects of their discoveries upon him.

By the experience which Columbus acquired during such a variety of voyages, to almost every part of the globe with which, at that time, any intercourse was carried on by sea, he was now become one of the most skilful navigators in Europe. But, not satisfied with that praise, his ambition aimed at something more. The successful progress of the Portuguese navigators had awakened a spirit of curiosity and emulation, which set every man of science upon examining all the circumstances that led to the discoveries which they had made, or that afforded a prospect of succeeding in any new and bolder undertaking. The mind of Columbus, naturally inquisitive, capable of deep reflection, and turned to speculations of this kind, was so often employed in revolving the principles upon which the Portuguese had founded their schemes of discovery, and the mode on which they had carried them on, that he gradually began to form an idea of improving upon their plan, and of accomplishing discoveries which hitherto they had attempted in vain.

He forms the idea of a new

To find out a passage by sea to the East Indies, was the great object in view at that

[e] Life of Columbus, c. iv. v.

BOOK II.

course to India.

period. From the time that the Portuguese doubled Cape de Verd, this was the point at which they aimed in all their navigations, and, in comparison with it, all their discoveries in Africa appeared inconsiderable. The fertility and riches of India had been known for many ages: its spices and other valuable commodities were in high request throughout Europe, and the vast wealth of the Venetians arising from their having engrossed this trade, had raised the envy of all nations. But how intent soever the Portuguese were upon discovering a new route to those desirable regions, they searched for it only by steering towards the south, in hopes of arriving at India, by turning to the east, after they had sailed round the farther extremity of Africa. This course was still unknown, and, even if discovered, was of such immense length, that a voyage from Europe to India must have appeared, at that period, an undertaking, extremely arduous, and of very uncertain issue. More than half a century had been employed in advancing from Cape Non to the equator; a much longer space of time might elapse before the more extensive navigation from that to India could be accomplished. These reflections upon the uncertainty, the danger, and tediousness of the course which the Portuguese were pursuing, naturally led Columbus to consider whether a shorter and more

direct passage to the East Indies might not be found out. After revolving long and seriously every circumstance suggested by his superior knowledge in the theory as well as practice of navigation; after comparing attentively the observations of modern pilots with the hints and conjectures of ancient authors, he at last concluded, that by sailing directly towards the west, across the Atlantic ocean, new countries, which probably formed a part of the great continent of India, must infallibly be discovered.

The principles on which his theory was founded.

PRINCIPLES and arguments of various kinds, and derived from different sources, induced him to adopt this opinion, seemingly as chimerical as it was new and extraordinary. The spherical figure of the earth was known, and its magnitude ascertained with some degree of accuracy. From this it was evident, that the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, as far as they were known at that time, formed but a small portion of the terraqueous globe. It was suitable to our ideas concerning the wisdom and beneficence of the Author of Nature, to believe that the vast space still unexplored was not covered entirely by a waste unprofitable ocean, but occupied by countries fit for the habitation of man. It appeared likewise extremely probable, that the continent, on this side of the globe, was balanced

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by a proportional quantity of land in the other hemisphere. These conclusions concerning the existence of another continent, drawn from the figure and structure of the globe, were confirmed by the observations and conjectures of modern navigators. A Portuguese pilot, having stretched farther to the west than was usual at that time, took up a piece of timber artificially carved, floating upon the sea; and as it was driven towards him by a westerly wind, he concluded that it came from some unknown land situated in that quarter. Columbus's brother-in-law had found, to the west of the Madeira isles, a piece of timber fashioned in the same manner, and brought by the same wind; and had seen likewise canes of an enormous size floating upon the waves, which resembled those described by Ptolemy as productions peculiar to the East Indies.[4] After a course of westerly winds, trees, torn up by the roots, were often driven upon the coasts of the Azores; and at one time, the dead bodies of two men with singular features, resembling neither the inhabitants of Europe nor of Africa, were cast ashore there.

As the force of this united evidence, arising from theoretical principles and practical ob-

[4] Lib. i. c. 17.

servations, led Columbus to expect the discovery of new countries in the western ocean, other reasons induced him to believe that these must be connected with the continent of India. Though the ancients had hardly ever penetrated into India farther than the banks of the Ganges, yet some Greek authors had ventured to describe the provinces beyond that river. As men are prone, and at liberty, to magnify what is remote or unknown, they represented them as regions of an immense extent. Ctesias affirmed that India was as large as all the rest of Asia. Onesicritus, whom Pliny the naturalist follows[e], contended that it was equal to a third part of the habitable earth. Nearchus asserted, that it would take four months to march in a straight line from one extremity of India to the other.[f] The journal of Marco Polo, who had proceeded towards the east far beyond the limits to which any European had ever advanced, seemed to confirm these exaggerated accounts of the ancients. By his magnificent descriptions of the kingdoms of *Cathay* and *Cipango*, and of many other countries, the names of which were unknown in Europe, India appeared to be a region of vast extent. From these accounts, which, however defec-

[e] Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 17.

[f] Strab. Georgr. lib. xv. p. 1011.

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tive, were the most accurate that the people of Europe had received at that period, with respect to the remote parts of the east, Columbus drew a just conclusion. He contended that, in proportion as the continent of India stretched out towards the east, it must, in consequence of the spherical figure of the earth, approach nearer to the islands which had lately been discovered to the west of Africa; that the distance from the one to the other was probably not very considerable; and that the most direct, as well as shortest course to the remote regions of the east, was to be found by sailing due west.[g] This notion concerning the vicinity of India to the western parts of our continent, was countenanced by some eminent writers among the ancients, the sanction of whose authority was necessary, in that age, to procure a favourable reception to any tenet. Aristotle thought it probable that the Columns of Hercules, or Straits of Gibraltar, were not far removed from the East Indies, and that there might be a communication by sea between them.[h] Seneca, in terms still more explicit, affirms, that, with a fair wind, one might sail from Spain to India, in a few

[g] See NOTE XII.

[h] Aristot. de Cœlo, lib. ii. c. 14. edit. Du Val. Par. 1629. vol. i. p. 472.

days.[1] The famous Atlantic island described by Plato, and supposed by many to be a real country, beyond which an unknown continent was situated, is represented by him as lying at no great distance from Spain. After weighing all these particulars, Columbus, in whose character the modesty and diffidence of true genius was united with the ardent enthusiasm of a projector, did not rest with such absolute assurance either upon his own arguments, or upon the authority of the ancients, as not to consult such of his contemporaries as were capable of comprehending the nature of the evidence which he produced in support of his opinion. As early as the year one thousand four hundred and seventy-four, he communicated his ideas concerning the probability of discovering new countries, by sailing westwards, to Paul, a physician of Florence, eminent for his knowledge of cosmography, and who, from the learning as well as candour which he discovers in his reply, appears to have been well entitled to the confidence which Columbus placed in him. He warmly approved of the plan, suggested several facts in confirmation of it, and encouraged Columbus to persevere in an undertaking so laudable,

[1] Senec. Quest. Natur. lib. i. in proem.

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and which must redound so much to the honour of his country, and the benefit of Europe.[k]

His schemes for carrying it into execution.

To a mind less capable of forming and of executing great designs than that of Columbus, all those reasonings and observations, and authorities, would have served only as the foundation of some plausible and fruitless theory, which might have furnished matter for ingenious discourse or fanciful conjecture. But with his sanguine and enterprising temper, speculation led directly to action. Fully satisfied himself with respect to the truth of his system, he was impatient to bring it to the test of experiment, and to set out upon a voyage of discovery. The first step towards this was to secure the patronage of some of the considerable powers in Europe, capable of undertaking such an enterprise. As long absence had not extinguished the affection which he bore to his native country, he wished that it should reap the fruits of his labours and invention. With this view, he laid his scheme before the Senate of Genoa, and making his country the first tender of his service, offered to sail under the banners of the republic, in quest of the new regions which he expected to discover. But Columbus had resided for so

He applies to the Genoese;

[k] Life of Columbus, c. viii.

many years in foreign parts, that his countrymen were unacquainted with his abilities and character; and though a maritime people, were so little accustomed to distant voyages, that they could form no just idea of the principles on which he founded his hopes of success. They inconsiderately rejected his proposal, as the dream of a chimerical projector, and lost for ever the opportunity of restoring their commonwealth to its ancient splendour.[1]

to the King of Portugal,

HAVING performed what was due to his country, Columbus was so little discouraged by the repulse which he had received, that, instead of relinquishing his undertaking, he pursued it with fresh ardour. He made his next overture to John II. King of Portugal, in whose dominions he had been long established, and whom he considered, on that account, as having the second claim to his service. Here every circumstance seemed to promise him a more favourable reception: he applied to a monarch of an enterprising genius, no incompetent judge in naval affairs, and proud of patronising every attempt to discover new countries. His subjects were the most experienced navigators in Europe, and the least apt to be intimidated either by the

[1] Herrera Hist. de las Indias Occid. dec. i. lib. i. c. vii.

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novelty or boldness of any maritime expedition. In Portugal, the professional skill of Columbus, as well as his personal good qualities, were thoroughly known: and as the former rendered it probable that his scheme was not altogether visionary, the latter exempted him from the suspicion of any sinister intention in proposing it. Accordingly, the King listened to him in the most gracious manner, and referred the consideration of his plan to Diego Ortiz, Bishop of Ceuta, and two Jewish physicians, eminent cosmographers, whom he was accustomed to consult in matters of this kind. As in Genoa, ignorance had opposed and disappointed Columbus; in Lisbon, he had to combat with prejudice, an enemy no less formidable. The persons, according to whose decision his scheme was to be adopted or rejected, had been the chief directors of the Portuguese navigations, and had advised to search for a passage to India, by steering a course directly opposite to that which Columbus recommended as shorter and more certain. They could not, therefore, approve of his proposal, without submitting to the double mortification of condemning their own theory, and acknowledging his superior sagacity. After teasing him with captious questions, and starting innumerable objections, with a view of betraying him into such a particular explanation of his

by whom he is deceived.

system, as might draw from him a full discovery of its nature, they deferred passing a final judgment with respect to it. In the mean time, they conspired to rob him of the honour and advantages which he expected from the success of his scheme, advising the King to dispatch a vessel secretly, in order to attempt the proposed discovery, by following exactly the course which Columbus seemed to point out. John, forgetting on this occasion the sentiments becoming a monarch, meanly adopted this perfidious counsel. But the pilot chosen to execute Columbus's plan had neither the genius, nor the fortitude of its author. Contrary winds arose, no sight of approaching land appeared, his courage failed, and he returned to Lisbon, execrating the project as equally extravagant and dangerous.[m]

He leaves Portugal, and repairs to the court of Spain.

UPON discovering this dishonourable transaction, Columbus felt the indignation natural to an ingenuous mind, and in the warmth of his resentment determined to break off all intercourse with a nation capable of such flagrant treachery. He instantly quitted the kingdom, and landed in Spain towards the close of the year one thousand four hundred and eighty-four. As he was now at liberty to court the

[m] Life of Columbus, c. xi. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 7.

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protection of any patron, whom he could engage to approve of his plan, and to carry it into execution, he resolved to propose it in person to Ferdinand and Isabella, who at that time governed the united kingdoms of Castile and Aragon. But as he had already experienced the uncertain issue of application to kings and ministers, he took the precaution of sending into England his brother Bartholomew, to whom he had fully communicated his ideas, in order that he might negotiate, at the same time, with Henry VII., who was reputed one of the most sagacious as well as opulent Princes in Europe.

Sends his brother into England.

Obstacles to his success in Spain.

It was not without reason that Columbus entertained doubts and fears with respect to the reception of his proposals in the Spanish court. Spain was, at that juncture, engaged in a dangerous war with Granada, the last of the Moorish kingdoms in that country. The wary and suspicious temper of Ferdinand was not formed to relish bold or uncommon designs. Isabella, though more generous and enterprising, was under the influence of her husband in all her actions. The Spaniards had hitherto made no efforts to extend navigation beyond its ancient limits, and had beheld the amazing progress of discovery among their neighbours the Portuguese, without one at-

tempt to imitate or to rival them. The war with the Infidels afforded an ample field to the national activity and love of glory. Under circumstances so unfavourable, it was impossible for Columbus to make rapid progress with a nation, naturally slow and dilatory in forming all its resolutions. His character, however, was admirably adapted to that of the people whose confidence and protection he solicited. He was grave, though courteous in his deportment; circumspect in his words and actions; irreproachable in his morals; and exemplary in his attention to all the duties and functions of religion. By qualities so respectable, he not only gained many private friends, but acquired such general esteem, that, notwithstanding the plainness of his appearance, suitable to the mediocrity of his fortune, he was not considered as a mere adventurer, to whom indigence had suggested a visionary project, but was received as a person to whose propositions serious attention was due.

His scheme examined by unskilful judges;

FERDINAND and Isabella, though fully occupied by their operations against the Moors, paid so much regard to Columbus, as to remit the consideration of his plan to the Queen's confessor, Ferdinand de Talavera. He consulted such of his countrymen as were supposed best qualified to decide with respect to

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a subject of this kind. But true science had hitherto made so little progress in Spain, that the pretended philosophers, selected to judge in a matter of such moment, did not comprehend the first principles upon which Columbus founded his conjectures and hopes. Some of them, from mistaken notions concerning the dimensions of the globe, contended that a voyage to those remote parts of the east which Columbus expected to discover, could not be performed in less than three years. Others concluded, that either he would find the ocean to be of infinite extent, according to the opinion of some ancient philosophers; or, if he should persist in steering towards the west beyond a certain point, that the convex figure of the globe would prevent his return, and that he must inevitably perish, in the vain attempt to open a communication between the two opposite hemispheres, which nature had for ever disjoined. Even without deigning to enter into any particular discussion, many rejected the scheme in general, upon the credit of a maxim, under which the ignorant and unenterprising shelter themselves in every age, "That it is presumptuous in any person, to suppose that he alone possesses knowledge superior to all the rest of mankind united." They maintained, that if there were really any such countries as Columbus pretended,

they could not have remained so long concealed, nor would the wisdom and sagacity of former ages have left the glory of this invention to an obscure Genoese pilot.

who made an unfavourable report concerning it.

IT required all Columbus's patience and address to negotiate with men capable of advancing such strange propositions. He had to contend not only with the obstinacy of ignorance, but with what is still more intractable, the pride of false knowledge. After innumerable conferences, and wasting five years in fruitless endeavours to inform and to satisfy judges so little capable of deciding with propriety, Talavera, at last, made such an unfavourable report to Ferdinand and Isabella, as induced them to acquaint Columbus, that until the war with the Moors should be brought to a period, it would be imprudent to engage in any new and extensive enterprise.

WHATEVER care was taken to soften the harshness of this declaration, Columbus considered it as a final rejection of his proposals. But, happily for mankind, that superiority of genius, which is capable of forming great and uncommon designs, is usually accompanied with an ardent enthusiasm, which can neither be cooled by delays, nor damped by disappointment. Columbus was of this sanguine

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temper. Though he felt deeply the cruel blow given to his hopes, and retired immediately from a court, where he had been amused so long with vain expectations, his confidence in the justness of his own system did not diminish, and his impatience to demonstrate the truth of it by an actual experiment, became greater than ever. Having courted the protection of sovereign states without success, he applied next to persons of inferior rank, and addressed successively the Dukes of Medina Sidonia, and Medina Celi, who, though subjects, were possessed of power and opulence more than equal to the enterprise which be projected. His negotiations with them proved as fruitless as those in which he had been hitherto engaged; for these noblemen were either as little convinced by Columbus's arguments as their superiors, or they were afraid of alarming the jealousy, and offending the pride of Ferdinand, by countenancing a scheme which he had rejected.[a]

Negotiation of his brother in England.

AMID the painful sensations occasioned by such a succession of disappointments, Columbus had to sustain the additional distress, of having received no accounts of his brother, whom he had sent to the court of England. In his voy-

[a] Life of Columb. c. 13. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 7.

age to that country, Bartholomew had been so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of pirates, who having stripped him of every thing, detained him a prisoner for several years. At length he made his escape, and arrived in London, but in such extreme indigence, that he was obliged to employ himself, during a considerable time, in drawing and selling maps, in order to pick up as much money as would purchase a decent dress, in which he might venture to appear at court. He then laid before the King the proposals with which he had been intrusted by his brother, and, notwithstanding Henry's excessive caution and parsimony, which rendered him averse to new or extensive undertakings, he received Columbus's overtures with more approbation than any monarch to whom they had hitherto been presented.

Columbus has some prospects of encouragement in Spain.

MEANWHILE, Columbus being unacquainted with his brother's fate, and having now no prospect of encouragement in Spain, resolved to visit the court of England in person, in hopes of meeting with a more favourable reception there. He had already made preparations for this purpose, and taken measures for the disposal of his children during his absence, when Juan Perez, the guardian of the monastery of Rabida, near Palos, in which they had been

BOOK II. educated, earnestly solicited him to defer his journey for a short time. Perez was a man of considerable learning, and of some credit with Queen Isabella, to whom he was known personally. He was warmly attached to Columbus, with whose abilities as well as integrity he had many opportunities of being acquainted. Prompted by curiosity or by friendship, he entered upon an accurate examination of his system, in conjunction with a physician settled in the neighbourhood, who was a considerable proficient in mathematical knowledge. This investigation satisfied them so thoroughly, with respect to the solidity of the principles on which Columbus founded his opinion, and the probability of success in executing the plan which he proposed, that Perez, in order to prevent his country from being deprived of the glory and benefit which must accrue to the patrons of such a grand enterprise, ventured to write to Isabella, conjuring her to consider the matter anew with the attention which it merited.

Moved by the representations of a person whom she respected, Isabella desired Perez to repair immediately to the village of Santa Fé, in which, on account of the siege of Granada, the court resided at that time, that she might

confer with him upon this important subject. The first effect of their interview was a gracious invitation of Columbus back to court, accompanied with the present of a small sum to equip him for the journey. As there was now a certain prospect that the war with the Moors would speedily be brought to an happy issue by the reduction of Granada, which would leave the nation at liberty to engage in new undertakings; this, as well as the mark of royal favour, with which Columbus had been lately honoured, encouraged his friends to appear with greater confidence than formerly in support of his scheme. The chief of these, Alonso de Quintanilla, comptroller of the finances in Castile, and Luis de Santangel, receiver of the ecclesiastical revenues in Aragon, whose meritorious zeal in promoting this great design entitles their names to an honourable place in history, introduced Columbus to many persons of high rank, and interested them warmly in his behalf.

Is again disappointed.

But it was not an easy matter to inspire Ferdinand with favourable sentiments. He still regarded Columbus's project as extravagant and chimerical; and in order to render the efforts of his partisans ineffectual, he had the address to employ, in this new negotiation with

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him, some of the persons who had formerly pronounced his scheme to be impracticable. To their astonishment, Columbus appeared before them with the same confident hopes of success as formerly, and insisted upon the same high recompense. He proposed that a small fleet should be fitted out, under his command, to attempt the discovery, and demanded to be appointed hereditary admiral and viceroy of all the seas and lands which he should discover, and to have the tenths of the profits arising from them, settled irrevocably upon himself and his descendants. At the same time, he offered to advance the eighth part of the sum necessary for accomplishing his design, on condition that he should be entitled to a proportional share of benefit from the adventure. If the enterprise should totally miscarry, he made no stipulation for any reward or emolument whatever. Instead of viewing this conduct as the clearest evidence of his full persuasion with respect to the truth of his own system, or being struck with that magnanimity which, after so many delays and repulses, would stoop to nothing inferior to its original claims, the persons with whom Columbus treated began meanly to calculate the expense of the expedition, and the value of the reward which he demanded. The expense, moderate as it

was, they represented to be too great for Spain in the present exhausted state of its finances. They contended that the honours and emoluments claimed by Columbus were exorbitant, even if he should perform the utmost of what he had promised; and if all his sanguine hopes should prove illusive, such vast concessions to an adventurer would be deemed not only inconsiderate, but ridiculous. In this imposing garb of caution and prudence, their opinion appeared so plausible, and was so warmly supported by Ferdinand, that Isabella declined giving any countenance to Columbus, and abruptly broke off the negotiation with him which she had begun.

This was more mortifying to Columbus than all the disappointments which he had hitherto met with. The invitation to court from Isabella, like an unexpected ray of light, had opened such prospects of success as encouraged him to hope that his labours were at an end; but now darkness and uncertainty returned, and his mind, firm as it was, could hardly support the shock of such an unforeseen reverse. He withdrew in deep anguish from court, with an intention of prosecuting his voyage to England as his last resource.

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Proves at last successful.

1492. January 2.

About that time Granada surrendered, and Ferdinand and Isabella, in triumphal pomp, took possession of a city, the reduction of which extirpated a foreign power from the heart of their dominions, and rendered them masters of all the provinces, extending from the bottom of the Pyrenees to the frontiers of Portugal. As the flow of spirits which accompanies success elevates the mind, and renders it enterprising, Quintanilla and Santangel, the vigilant and discerning patrons of Columbus, took advantage of this favourable situation, in order to make one effort more in behalf of their friend. They addressed themselves to Isabella, and after expressing some surprise, that she, who had always been the munificent patroness of generous undertakings, should hesitate so long to countenance the most splendid scheme that had ever been proposed to any monarch; they represented to her, that Columbus was a man of a sound understanding and virtuous character, well qualified, by his experience in navigation, as well as his knowledge of geometry, to form just ideas with respect to the structure of the globe and the situation of its various regions; that by offering to risk his own life and fortune in the execution of his scheme, he gave the most satisfying evidence both of his integrity and hope of success; that the sum

requisite for equipping such an armament as he demanded was inconsiderable, and the advantages which might accrue from his undertaking were immense; that he demanded no recompense for his invention and labour, but what was to arise from the countries which he should discover; that, as it was worthy of her magnanimity to make this noble attempt to extend the sphere of human knowledge, and to open an intercourse with regions hitherto unknown, so it would afford the highest satisfaction to her piety and zeal, after re-establishing the Christian faith in those provinces of Spain from which it had been long banished, to discover a new world, to which she might communicate the light and blessings of divine truth; that if now she did not decide instantly the opportunity would be irretrievably lost; that Columbus was on his way to foreign countries, where some prince, more fortunate or adventurous, would close with his proposals, and Spain would for ever bewail that fatal timidity which had excluded her from the glory and advantages that she had once in her power to have enjoyed. BOOK II. 1492.

These forcible arguments, urged by persons of such authority, and at a juncture so well chosen, produced the desired effect. They

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dispelled all Isabella's doubts and fears; she ordered Columbus to be instantly recalled, declared her resolution of employing him on his own terms, and regretting the low estate of her finances, generously offered to pledge her own jewels, in order to raise as much money as might be needed in making preparations for the voyage. Santangel, in a transport of gratitude, kissed the Queen's hand, and in order to save her from having recourse to such a mortifying expedient for procuring money, engaged to advance immediately the sum that was requisite.°

The conditions of his agreement with Spain.

COLUMBUS had proceeded some leagues on his journey, when the messenger from Isabella overtook him. Upon receiving an account of the unexpected resolution in his favour, he returned directly to Santa Fé, though some remainder of diffidence still mingled itself with his joy. But the cordial reception which he met with from Isabella, together with the near prospect of setting out upon that voyage which had so long been the object of his thoughts and wishes, soon effaced the remembrance of all that he had suffered in Spain, during eight tedious years of solicitation and suspense. The

° Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 8.

negotiation now went forward with facility and dispatch, and a treaty or capitulation with Columbus was signed on the seventeenth of April, one thousand four hundred and ninety-two. The chief articles of it were:—1. Ferdinand and Isabella, as sovereigns of the ocean, constituted Columbus their high admiral in all the seas, islands, and continents, which should be discovered by his industry; and stipulated that he and his heirs for ever should enjoy this office, with the same powers and prerogatives which belonged to the high admiral of Castile, within the limits of his jurisdiction. 2. They appointed Columbus their viceroy in all the islands and continents which he should discover; but if, for the better administration of affairs, it should hereafter be necessary to establish a separate governor in any of those countries, they authorised Columbus to name three persons, of whom they would choose one for that office; and the dignity of viceroy, with all its immunities, was likewise to be hereditary in the family of Columbus. 3. They granted to Columbus and his heirs for ever, the tenth of the free profits accruing from the productions and commerce of the countries which he should discover. 4. They declared, that if any controversy or law-suit shall arise with respect to any mercantile transaction in the countries which should be discovered, it

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should be determined by the sole authority of Columbus, or of judges to be appointed by him. 5. They permitted Columbus to advance one-eighth part of what should be expended in preparing for the expedition, and in carrying on commerce with the countries which he should discover, and entitled him, in return, to an eighth part of the profit.[p]

THOUGH the name of Ferdinand appears conjoined with that of Isabella in this transaction, his distrust of Columbus was still so violent that he refused to take any part in the enterprise as King of Aragon. As the whole expense of the expedition was to be defrayed by the crown of Castile, Isabella reserved for her subjects of that kingdom an exclusive right to all the benefits which might redound from its success.

The preparations for his voyage.

As soon as the treaty was signed, Isabella, by her attention and activity in forwarding the preparations for the voyage, endeavoured to make some reparation to Columbus for the time which he had lost in fruitless solicitation. By the twelfth of May, all that depended upon her was adjusted; and Columbus waited on the King and Queen, in order to receive their final instructions. Every thing respecting the desti-

[p] Life of Columbus, c. 15. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 9.

nation and conduct of the voyage, they committed implicitly to the disposal of his prudence. But that they might avoid giving any just cause of offence to the King of Portugal, they strictly enjoined him not to approach near to the Portuguese settlements on the coast of Guinea, or in any of the other countries to which the Portuguese claimed right as discoverers. Isabella had ordered the ships, of which Columbus was to take the command, to be fitted out in the port of Palos, a small maritime town in the province of Andalusia. As the guardian Juan Perez, to whom Columbus had already been so much indebted, resided in the neighbourhood of this place, he, by the influence of that good ecclesiastic, as well as by his own connection with the inhabitants, not only raised among them what he wanted of the sum that he was bound by treaty to advance, but engaged several of them to accompany him in the voyage. The chief of these associates were three brothers of the name of Pinzon, of considerable wealth, and of great experience in naval affairs, who were willing to hazard their lives and fortunes in the expedition. 1492.

But, after all the efforts of Isabella and Columbus, the armament was not suitable, either to the dignity of the nation by which it was

BOOK II. 1492.

equipped, or to the importance of the service for which it was destined. It consisted of three vessels. The largest, a ship of no considerable burden, was commanded by Columbus, as admiral, who gave it the name of *Santa Maria*, out of respect for the Blessed Virgin, whom he honoured with singular devotion. Of the second, called the *Pinta*, Martin Pinzon was captain, and his brother Francis pilot. The third, named the *Nigna*, was under the command of Vincent Yanez Pinzon. These two were light vessels, hardly superior in burden or force to large boats. The squadron, if it merits that name, was victualled for twelve months, and had on board ninety men, mostly sailors, together with a few adventurers who followed the fortune of Columbus, and some gentlemen of Isabella's court, whom she appointed to accompany him. Though the expense of the undertaking was one of the circumstances which chiefly alarmed the court of Spain, and retarded so long the negotiation with Columbus, the sum employed in fitting out this squadron did not exceed four thousand pounds.

As the art of ship-building in the fifteenth century was extremely rude, and the bulk of vessels was accommodated to the short and easy voyages along the coast which they were accustomed to perform, it is a proof of the

courage as well as enterprising genius of Columbus, that he ventured, with a fleet so unfit for a distant navigation, to explore unknown seas, where he had no chart to guide him, no knowledge of the tides and currents, and no experience of the dangers to which he might be exposed. His eagerness to accomplish the great design which had so long engrossed his thoughts made him overlook or disregard every circumstance that would have intimidated a mind less adventurous. He pushed forwards the preparations with such ardour, and was seconded so effectually by the persons to whom Isabella committed the superintendence of this business, that every thing was soon in readiness for the voyage. But as Columbus was deeply impressed with sentiments of religion, he would not set out upon an expedition so arduous, and of which one great object was to extend the knowledge of the Christian faith, without imploring publicly the guidance and protection of Heaven. With this view, he, together with all the persons under his command, marched in solemn procession to the monastery of Rabida. After confessing their sins, and obtaining absolution, they received the holy sacrament from the hands of the guardian, who joined his prayers to theirs for the success of an enterprise which he had so zealously patronised. 1492.

BOOK II.

1492. His departure from Spain.

NEXT morning, being Friday the third day of August, in the year one thousand four hundred and ninety-two, Columbus set sail, a little before sun-rise, in presence of a vast crowd of spectators, who sent up their supplications to Heaven for the prosperous issue of the voyage, which they wished rather than expected. Columbus steered directly for the Canary Islands, and arrived there without any occurrence that would have deserved notice on any other occasion. But, in a voyage of such expectation and importance, every circumstance was the object of attention. The rudder of the Pinta broke loose the day after she left the harbour, and that accident alarmed the crew, no less superstitious than unskilful, as a certain omen of the unfortunate destiny of the expedition. Even in the short run to the Canaries, the ships were found to be so crazy and ill-appointed, as to be very improper for a navigation which was expected to be both long and dangerous. Columbus refitted them, however, to the best of his power, and having supplied himself with fresh provisions, he took his departure from Gomera, one of the most westerly of the Canary Islands, on the sixth day of September.

August 13.

The course which he held.

HERE the voyage of discovery may properly be said to begin; for Columbus, holding his

course due west, left immediately the usual track of navigation, and stretched into unfrequented and unknown seas. The first day, as it was very calm, he made but little way; but on the second, he lost sight of the Canaries; and many of the sailors, dejected already and dismayed, when they contemplated the boldness of the undertaking, began to beat their breasts, and to shed tears, as if they were never more to behold land. Columbus comforted them with assurances of success, and the prospect of vast wealth, in those opulent regions whither he was conducting them. This early discovery of the spirit of his followers taught Columbus, that he must prepare to struggle, not only with the unavoidable difficulties which might be expected from the nature of his undertaking, but with such as were likely to arise from the ignorance and timidity of the people under his command; and he perceived that the art of governing the minds of men would be no less requisite for accomplishing the discoveries which he had in view, than naval skill and undaunted courage. Happily for himself, and for the country by which he was employed, he joined to the ardent temper and inventive genius of a projector, virtues of another species, which are rarely united with them. He possessed a thorough knowledge of

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mankind, an insinuating address, a patient perseverance in executing any plan, the perfect government of his own passions, and the talent of acquiring an ascendant over those of other men. All these qualities, which formed him for command, were accompanied with that superior knowledge of his profession, which begets confidence in times of difficulty and danger. To unskilful Spanish sailors, accustomed only to coasting voyages in the Mediterranean, the maritime science of Columbus, the fruit of thirty years' experience, improved by an acquaintance with all the inventions of the Portuguese, appeared immense. As soon as they put to sea, he regulated every thing by his sole authority; he superintended the execution of every order; and allowing himself only a few hours for sleep, he was at all other times upon deck. As his course lay through seas which had not formerly been visited, the sounding-line, or instruments for observation, were continually in his hands. After the example of the Portuguese discoverers, he attended to the motion of tides and currents, watched the flight of birds, the appearance of fishes, of sea-weeds, and of every thing that floated on the waves, and entered every occurrence, with a minute exactness, in the journal which he kept. As the length of

Vigilance and attention of Columbus.

the voyage could not fail of alarming sailors habituated only to short excursions, Columbus endeavoured to conceal from them the real progress which they made. With this view, though they run eighteen leagues on the second day after they left Gomera, he gave out that they had advanced only fifteen, and he uniformly employed the same artifice of reckoning short during the whole voyage. By the fourteenth of September, the fleet was above two hundred leagues to the west of the Canary Isles, at a greater distance from land than any Spaniard had been before that time. There they were struck with an appearance no less astonishing than new. They observed that the magnetic needle, in their compasses, did not point exactly to the polar star, but varied towards the west; and as they proceeded, this variation increased. This appearance, which is now familiar, though it still remains one of the mysteries of nature, into the cause of which the sagacity of man hath not been able to penetrate, filled the companions of Columbus with terror. They were now in a boundless and unknown ocean, far from the usual course of navigation; nature itself seemed to be altered, and the only guide which they had left was about to fail them. Columbus, with no less quickness than ingenuity, invented a reason

1492.

Apprehensions and alarms of his crew.

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for this appearance, which, though it did not satisfy himself, seemed so plausible to them, that it dispelled their fears, or silenced their murmurs.

He still continued to steer due west, nearly in the same latitude with the Canary Islands. In this course he came within the sphere of the trade wind, which blows invariably from east to west, between the tropics and a few degrees beyond them. He advanced before this steady gale with such uniform rapidity, that it was seldom necessary to shift a sail. When about four hundred leagues to the west of the Canaries, he found the sea so covered with weeds, that it resembled a meadow of vast extent, and in some places they were so thick, as to retard the motion of the vessels. This strange appearance occasioned new alarm and disquiet. The sailors imagined that they were now arrived at the utmost boundary of the navigable ocean; that these floating weeds would obstruct their farther progress, and concealed dangerous rocks, or some large tract of land, which had sunk, they knew not how, in that place. Columbus endeavoured to persuade them, that what had alarmed, ought rather to have encouraged them, and was to be considered as a sign of approaching land. At the same time,

a brisk gale arose, and carried them forward. Several birds were seen hovering about the ship [q], and directed their flight towards the west. The desponding crew resumed some degree of spirit, and began to entertain fresh hopes. 1492.

These increase.

Upon the first of October they were, according to the admiral's reckoning, seven hundred and seventy leagues to the west of the Canaries; but lest his men should be intimidated by the prodigious length of the navigation, he gave out that they had proceeded only five hundred and eighty-four leagues; and, fortunately for Columbus, neither his own pilot, nor those of the other ships, had skill sufficient to correct this error, and discover the deceit. They had now been above three weeks at sea; they had proceeded far beyond what former navigators had attempted or deemed possible; all their prognostics of discovery, drawn from the flight of birds and other circumstances, had proved fallacious; the appearances of land, with which their own credulity or the artifice of their commander had from time to time flattered and amused them, had been altogether illusive, and their prospect of success seemed now to be as distant as ever. These reflections

[q] See NOTE XIII.

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occurred often to men, who had no other object or occupation than to reason and discourse concerning the intention and circumstances of their expedition. They made impression, at first, upon the ignorant and timid, and, extending by degrees, to such as were better informed or more resolute, the contagion spread at length from ship to ship. From secret whispers or murmurings, they proceeded to open cabals and public complaints. They taxed their sovereign with inconsiderate credulity, in paying such regard to the vain promises and rash conjectures of an indigent foreigner, as to hazard the lives of so many of her own subjects, in prosecuting a chimerical scheme. They affirmed that they had fully performed their duty, by venturing so far in an unknown and hopeless course, and could incur no blame for refusing to follow, any longer, a desperate adventurer to certain destruction. They contended, that it was necessary to think of returning to Spain, while their crazy vessels were still in a condition to keep the sea, but expressed their fears that the attempt would prove vain, as the wind, which had hitherto been so favourable to their course, must render it impossible to sail in the opposite direction. All agreed that Columbus should be compelled by force to adopt a mea-

sure on which their common safety depended. Some of the more audacious proposed, as the most expeditious and certain method for getting rid at once of his remonstrances, to throw him into the sea, being persuaded that, upon their return to Spain, the death of an unsuccessful projector would excite little concern, and be inquired into with no curiosity. 1492.

The address of Columbus in soothing them.

COLUMBUS was fully sensible of his perilous situation. He had observed, with great uneasiness, the fatal operation of ignorance and of fear in producing disaffection among his crew, and saw that it was now ready to burst out into open mutiny. He retained, however, perfect presence of mind. He affected to seem ignorant of their machinations. Notwithstanding the agitation and solicitude of his own mind, he appeared with a cheerful countenance, like a man satisfied with the progress he had made, and confident of success. Sometimes he employed all the arts of insinuation, to soothe his men. Sometimes he endeavoured to work upon their ambition or avarice, by magnificent descriptions of the fame and wealth which they were about to acquire. On other occasions, he assumed a tone of authority, and threatened them with vengeance from their sovereign, if, by their dastardly behaviour, they should de-

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feat this noble effort to promote the glory of God, and to exalt the Spanish name above that of every other nation. Even with seditious sailors, the words of a man whom they had been accustomed to reverence, were weighty and persuasive, and not only restrained them from those violent excesses which they meditated, but prevailed with them to accompany their admiral for some time longer.

As they proceeded, the indications of approaching land seemed to be more certain, and excited hope in proportion. The birds began to appear in flocks, making towards the south-west. Columbus, in imitation of the Portuguese navigators, who had been guided, in several of their discoveries, by the motion of birds, altered his course from due west towards that quarter whither they pointed their flight. But, after holding on for several days in this new direction, without any better success than formerly, having seen no object, during thirty days, but the sea and the sky, the hopes of his companions subsided faster than they had risen; their fears revived with additional force; impatience, rage, and despair, appeared in every countenance. All sense of subordination was lost: the officers, who had hitherto concurred with Columbus in opinion, and supported his

Their fears return.

Danger of a mutiny.

authority, now took part with the private men; they assembled tumultuously on the deck, expostulated with their commander, mingled threats with their expostulations, and required him instantly to tack about and to return to Europe. Columbus perceived that it would be of no avail to have recourse to any of his former arts, which having been tried so often had lost their effect; and that it was impossible to rekindle any zeal for the success of the expedition among men, in whose breasts fear had extinguished every generous sentiment. He saw that it was no less vain to think of employing either gentle or severe measures to quell a mutiny so general and so violent. It was necessary, on all these accounts, to soothe passions which he could no longer command, and to give way to a torrent too impetuous to be checked. He promised solemnly to his men that he would comply with their request, provided they would accompany him, and obey his command for three days longer, and if, during that time, land were not discovered, he would then abandon the enterprise, and direct his course towards Spain.[r]

1492.

Distress of Columbus.

Enraged as the sailors were, and impatient to turn their faces again towards their native

Encouraging appearances of success.

[r] Oviedo, Hist. ap. Ramus, vol. iii. p. 81. E.

BOOK II. 1492.

country, this proposition did not appear to them unreasonable. Nor did Columbus hazard much in confining himself to a term so short. The presages of discovering land were now so numerous and promising, that he deemed them infallible. For some days the sounding line reached the bottom, and the soil which it brought up indicated land to be at no great distance. The flocks of birds increased, and were composed not only of sea-fowl, but of such land birds as could not be supposed to fly far from the shore. The crew of the Pinta observed a cane floating, which seemed to have been newly cut, and likewise a piece of timber artificially carved. The sailors aboard the Nigna took up the branch of a tree with red berries, perfectly fresh. The clouds around the setting sun assumed a new appearance; the air was more mild and warm, and, during night, the wind became unequal and variable. From all these symptoms, Columbus was so confident of being near land, that on the evening of the eleventh of October, after public prayers for success, he ordered the sails to be furled, and the ships to lie to, keeping strict watch, lest they should be driven ashore in the night. During this interval of suspense and expectation, no man shut his eyes, all kept upon deck, gazing intently towards that quarter where they expected to discover the land,

which had been so long the object of their wishes. BOOK II. 1492.

Land discovered.

ABOUT two hours before midnight, Columbus standing on the forecastle, observed a light at a distance, and privately pointed it out to Pedro Guttierez, a page of the Queen's wardrobe. Guttierez perceived it, and calling to Salcedo, comptroller of the fleet, all three saw it in motion, as if it were carried from place to place. A little after midnight the joyful sound of *land! land!* was heard from the Pinta, which kept always a-head of the other ships. But, having been so often deceived by fallacious appearances, every man was now become slow of belief, and waited in all the anguish of uncertainty and impatience, for the return of day. As soon as morning dawned, Friday, Oct. 12. all doubts and fears were dispelled. From every ship an island was seen about two leagues to the north, whose flat and verdant fields, well stored with wood, and watered with many rivulets, presented the aspect of a delightful country. The crew of the Pinta instantly began the *Te Deum*, as a hymn of thanksgiving to God, and were joined by those of the other ships, with tears of joy and transports of congratulation. This office of gratitude to Heaven was followed by an act of justice to their commander. They threw themselves at the

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feet of Columbus, with feelings of self-condemnation mingled with reverence. They implored him to pardon their ignorance, incredulity, and insolence, which had created him so much unnecessary disquiet, and had so often obstructed the prosecution of his well-concerted plan; and passing, in the warmth of their admiration, from one extreme to another, they now pronounced the man, whom they had so lately reviled and threatened, to be a person inspired by Heaven with sagacity and fortitude more than human, in order to accomplish a design so far beyond the ideas and conception of all former ages.

First interview with the natives.

As soon as the sun arose, all their boats were manned and armed. They rowed towards the island with their colours displayed, with warlike music, and other martial pomp. As they approached the coast, they saw it covered with a multitude of people, whom the novelty of the spectacle had drawn together, whose attitudes and gestures expressed wonder and astonishment at the strange objects which presented themselves to their view. Columbus was the first European who set foot in the New World which he had discovered. He landed in a rich dress, and with a naked sword in his hand. His men followed, and kneeling down, they all kissed the ground

which they had so long desired to see. They next erected a crucifix, and prostrating themselves before it, returned thanks to God for conducting their voyage to such an happy issue. They then took solemn possession of the country for the crown of Castile and Leon, with all the formalities which the Portuguese were accustomed to observe in acts of this kind, in their new discoveries.[s] 1492.

Their mutual astonishment.

THE Spaniards, while thus employed, were surrounded by many of the natives, who gazed, in silent admiration, upon actions which they could not comprehend, and of which they did not foresee the consequences. The dress of the Spaniards, the whiteness of their skins, their beards, their arms, appeared strange and surprising. The vast machines in which they had traversed the ocean, that seemed to move upon the waters, with wings, and uttered a dreadful sound resembling thunder, accompanied with lightning and smoke, struck them with such terror, that they began to respect their new guests as a superior order of beings, and concluded that they were children of the Sun, who had descended to visit the earth.

[s] Life of Columbus, c. 22, 23. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 13.

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THE Europeans were hardly less amazed at the scene now before them. Every herb, and shrub, and tree, was different from those which flourished in Europe. The soil seemed to be rich, but bore few marks of cultivation. The climate, even to the Spaniards, felt warm, though extremely delightful. The inhabitants appeared in the simple innocence of nature, entirely naked. Their black hair, long and uncurled, floated upon their shoulders, or was bound in tresses around their heads. They had no beards, and every part of their bodies was perfectly smooth. Their complexion was of a dusky copper colour, their features singular, rather than disagreeable, their aspect gentle and timid. Though not tall, they were well shaped and active. Their faces, and several parts of their body, were fantastically painted with glaring colours. They were shy at first through fear, but soon became familiar with the Spaniards, and with transports of joy received from them hawks-bells, glass beads, or other baubles, in return for which they gave such provisions as they had, and some cotton yarn, the only commodity of value that they could produce. Towards evening, Columbus returned to his ship, accompanied by many of the islanders in their boats, which they called *canoes*, and though

rudely formed out of the trunk of a single tree, they rowed them with surprising dexterity. Thus, in the first interview between the inhabitants of the old and new worlds, every thing was conducted amicably, and to their mutual satisfaction. The former, enlightened and ambitious, formed already vast ideas with respect to the advantages which they might derive from the regions that began to open to their view. The latter, simple and undiscerning, had no foresight of the calamities and desolation, which were approaching their country. 1492.

Columbus assumes the title of Admiral and Viceroy.

COLUMBUS, who now assumed the title and authority of Admiral and Viceroy, called the island which he had discovered *San Salvador*. It is better known by the name of *Guanahani*, which the natives gave to it, and is one of that large cluster of islands called the Lucaya or Bahama isles. It is situated above three thousand miles to the west of Gomera, from which the squadron took its departure, and only four degrees to the south of it; so little had Columbus deviated from the westerly course, which he had chosen as the most proper.

Proceeds towards the south.

COLUMBUS employed the next day in visiting the coasts of the island; and from the universal poverty of the inhabitants, he perceived that

BOOK II. 1492.

this was not the rich country for which he sought. But, conformably to his theory concerning the discovery of those regions of Asia which stretched towards the east, he concluded that San Salvador was one of the isles which geographers described as situated in the great ocean adjacent to India.[t] Having observed that most of the people whom he had seen wore small plates of gold, by way of ornament, in their nostrils, he eagerly inquired where they got that precious metal. They pointed towards the south, and made him comprehend by signs, that gold abounded in countries situated in that quarter. Thither he immediately determined to direct his course, in full confidence of finding there those opulent regions which had been the object of his voyage, and would be a recompense for all his toils and dangers. He took along with him seven of the natives of San Salvador, that, by acquiring the Spanish language, they might serve as guides and interpreters; and those innocent people considered it as a mark of distinction when they were selected to accompany him.

Discovers Cuba.

He saw several islands, and touched at three of the largest, on which he bestowed the names of St. Mary of the Conception, Fernandina, and

[t] Pet. Mart. epist. 135.

Isabella. But, as their soil, productions, and inhabitants, nearly resembled those of San Salvador, he made no stay in any of them. He inquired every where for gold, and the signs that were uniformly made by way of answer, confirmed him in the opinion that it was brought from the south. He followed that course, and soon discovered a country which appeared very extensive, not perfectly level, like those which he had already visited, but so diversified with rising grounds, hills, rivers, woods, and plains, that he was uncertain whether it might prove an island, or part of the continent. The natives of San Salvador, whom he had on board, called it *Cuba;* Columbus gave it the name of Juana. He entered the mouth of a large river with his squadron, and all the inhabitants fled to the mountains as he approached the shore. But as he resolved to careen his ships in that place, he sent some Spaniards, together with one of the people of San Salvador, to view the interior part of the country. They, having advanced above sixty miles from the shore, reported, upon their return, that the soil was richer and more cultivated than any they had hitherto discovered; that, besides many scattered cottages, they had found one village, containing above a thousand inhabitants; that the people, though naked, seemed to be

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more intelligent than those of San Salvador, but had treated them with the same respectful attention, kissing their feet, and honouring them as sacred beings allied to Heaven; that they had given them to eat a certain root, the taste of which resembled roasted chestnuts, and likewise a singular species of corn called *maize*, which, either when roasted whole or ground into meal, was abundantly palatable; that there seemed to be no four-footed animals in the country, but a species of dogs, which could not bark, and a creature resembling a rabbit, but of a much smaller size; that they had observed some ornaments of gold among the people, but of no great value.[u]

His conjectures with regard to it.

THESE messengers had prevailed with some of the natives to accompany them, who informed Columbus, that the gold of which they made their ornaments was found in *Cubanacan*. By this word they meant the middle or inland part of Cuba; but Columbus, being ignorant of their language, as well as unaccustomed to their pronunciation, and his thoughts running continually upon his own theory concerning the discovery of the East-Indies, he was led, by the resemblance of sound, to suppose that they spoke of the

[u] Life of Columbus, c. 24—28. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 14.

Great Khan, and imagined that the opulent kingdom of *Cathay*, described by Marco Polo, was not very remote. This induced him to employ some time in viewing the country. He visited almost every harbour, from Porto del Principe, on the north coast of Cuba, to the eastern extremity of the island: but, though delighted with the beauty of the scenes which every where presented themselves, and amazed at the luxuriant fertility of the soil, both which, from their novelty, made a more lively impression upon his imagination [x], he did not find gold in such quantity as was sufficient to satisfy either the avarice of his followers, or the expectations of the court to which he was to return. The people of the country, as much astonished at his eagerness in quest of gold as the Europeans were at their ignorance and simplicity, pointed towards the east, where an island which they called *Hayti* was situated, in which that metal was more abundant than among them. Columbus ordered his squadron to bend its course thither; but Martin Alonzo Pinzon, impatient to be the first who should take possession of the treasures which this country was supposed to contain, quitted his companions, regardless of all the admiral's sig-

[x] See NOTE XIV.

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nals to slacken sail until they should come up with him.

Discovers the island Hispaniola.

COLUMBUS, retarded by contrary winds, did not reach Hayti till the sixth of December. He called the port where he first touched St. Nicholas, and the island itself Espagnola, in honour of the kingdom by which he was employed; and it is the only country, of those he had yet discovered, which has retained the name that he gave it. As he could neither meet with the Pinta, nor have any intercourse with the inhabitants, who fled in great consternation towards the woods, he soon quitted St. Nicholas, and, sailing along the northern coast of the island, he entered another harbour, which he called Conception. Here he was more fortunate; his people overtook a woman who was flying from them, and after treating her with great gentleness, dismissed her with a present of such toys as they knew were most valued in those regions. The description which she gave to her countrymen of the humanity and wonderful qualities of the strangers; their admiration of the trinkets, which she shewed with exultation; and their eagerness to participate of the same favours; removed all their fears, and induced many of them to repair to the harbour. The strange objects which they beheld, and the baubles

which Columbus bestowed upon them, amply gratified their curiosity and their wishes. They nearly resembled the people of Guanahani and Cuba. They were naked like them, ignorant and simple; and seemed to be equally unacquainted with all the arts which appear most necessary in polished societies; but they were gentle, credulous, and timid, to a degree which rendered it easy to acquire the ascendant over them, especially as their excessive admiration led them into the same error with the people of the other islands, in believing the Spaniards to be more than mortals, and descended immediately from Heaven. They possessed gold in greater abundance than their neighbours, which they readily exchanged for bells, beads, or pins; and in this unequal traffic both parties were highly pleased, each considering themselves as gainers by the transaction. Here Columbus was visited by a prince or *cazique* of the country. He appeared with all the pomp known among a simple people, being carried in a sort of palanquin upon the shoulders of four men, and attended by many of his subjects, who served him with great respect. His deportment was grave and stately, very reserved towards his own people, but with Columbus and the Spaniards extremely courteous. He gave the admiral some thin plates

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of gold, and a girdle of curious workmanship, receiving in return presents of small value, but highly acceptable to him.[y]

Columbus, still intent on discovering the mines which yielded gold, continued to interrogate all the natives with whom he had any intercourse, concerning their situation. They concurred in pointing out a mountainous country, which they called *Cibao*, at some distance from the sea, and farther towards the east. Struck with this sound, which appeared to him the same with *Cipango*, the name by which Marco Polo, and other travellers to the east, distinguished the island of Japan, he no longer doubted with respect to the vicinity of the countries which he had discovered to the remote parts of Asia; and in full expectation of reaching soon those regions which had been the object of his voyage, he directed his course towards the east. He put into a commodious harbour, which he called St. Thomas, and found that district to be under the government of a powerful cazique, named *Guacanahari*, who, as he afterwards learned, was one of the five sovereigns among whom the whole island was divided. He immediately sent messengers to

[y] Life of Columbus, c. 32. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 15, &c.

Columbus, who, in his name, delivered to him the present of a mask curiously fashioned with the ears, nose, and mouth of beaten gold, and invited him to the place of his residence, near the harbour now called Cape François, some leagues towards the east. Columbus dispatched some of his officers to visit this prince, who, as he behaved himself with greater dignity, seemed to claim more attention. They returned with such favourable accounts both of the country and of the people, as made Columbus impatient for that interview with Guacanahari to which he had been invited. 1492.

One of his ships lost.

He sailed for this purpose from St. Thomas, on the twenty-fourth of December, with a fair wind, and the sea perfectly calm; and as, amidst the multiplicity of his occupations, he had not shut his eyes for two days, he retired at midnight in order to take some repose, having committed the helm to the pilot, with strict injunctions not to quit it for a moment. The pilot, dreading no danger, carelessly left the helm to an unexperienced cabin-boy, and the ship, carried away by a current, was dashed against a rock. The violence of the shock awakened Columbus. He ran up to the deck. There all was confusion and despair. He alone retained presence of mind. He ordered

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some of the sailors to take a boat, and carry out an anchor astern; but, instead of obeying, they made off towards the Nigna, which was about half a league distant. He then commanded the masts to be cut down, in order to lighten the ship; but all his endeavours were too late; the vessel opened near the keel, and filled so fast with water that its loss was inevitable. The smoothness of the sea, and the timely assistance of boats from the Nigna, enabled the crew to save their lives. As soon as the islanders heard of this disaster, they crowded to the shore, with their prince Guacanahari at their head. Instead of taking advantage of the distress in which they beheld the Spaniards, to attempt any thing to their detriment, they lamented their misfortune with tears of sincere condolence. Not satisfied with this unavailing expression of their sympathy, they put to sea a number of canoes, and, under the direction of the Spaniards, assisted in saving whatever could be got out of the wreck; and, by the united labour of so many hands, almost every thing of value was carried ashore. As fast as the goods were landed, Guacanahari in person took charge of them. By his orders they were all deposited in one place, and armed sentinels were posted, who kept the multitude at a distance, in order to prevent them not only from embezzling, but from inspecting too cu-

riously what belonged to their guests.[z] Next morning this prince visited Columbus, who was now on board the Nigna, and endeavoured to console him for his loss, by offering all that he possessed to repair it.[a]

THE condition of Columbus was such, that he stood in need of consolation. He had hitherto procured no intelligence of the Pinta, and no longer doubted but that his treacherous associate had set sail for Europe, in order to have the merit of carrying the first tidings of the extraordinary discoveries which had been made, and to pre-occupy so far the ear of their sovereign, as to rob him of the glory and reward to which he was justly entitled. There remained but one vessel, and that the smallest and most crazy of the squadron, to traverse such a vast ocean, and carry so many men back to Europe. Each of those circumstances was alarming, and filled the mind of Columbus with the utmost solicitude. The desire of overtaking Pinzon, and of effacing the unfavourable impressions which his misrepresentations might make in Spain, made it necessary to return thither without delay. The difficulty of taking such a number of persons aboard the Nigna,

Distress of Columbus.

[z] See NOTE XV. [a] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 18.

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confirmed him in an opinion, which the fertility of the country, and the gentle temper of the people, had already induced him to form. He resolved to leave a part of his crew in the island, that by residing there, they might learn the language of the natives, study their disposition, examine the nature of the country, search for mines, prepare for the commodious settlement of the colony, with which he purposed to return, and thus secure and facilitate the acquisition of those advantages which he expected from his discoveries. When he mentioned this to his men, all approved of the design; and from impatience under the fatigue of a long voyage, from the levity natural to sailors, or from the hopes of amassing wealth in a country, which afforded such promising specimens of its riches, many offered voluntarily to be among the number of those who should remain.

1492. Resolves to leave a part of his crew in the island.

Nothing was now wanting towards the execution of this scheme, but to obtain the consent of Guacanahari; and his unsuspicious simplicity soon presented to the admiral a favourable opportunity of proposing it. Columbus having, in the best manner he could, by broken words and signs, expressed some curiosity to know the cause which had moved the islanders to fly with such precipitation

Obtains the consent of the natives.

upon the approach of his ships, the cazique informed him that the country was much infested by the incursions of certain people, whom he called *Carribeans*, who inhabited several islands to the south-east. These he described as a fierce and warlike race of men, who delighted in blood, and devoured the flesh of the prisoners who were so unhappy as to fall into their hands; and as the Spaniards at their first appearance were supposed to be Carribeans, whom the natives, however numerous, durst not face in battle, they had recourse to their usual method of securing their safety, by flying into the thickest and most impenetrable woods. Guacanahari, while speaking of those dreadful invaders, discovered such symptoms of terror, as well as such consciousness of the inability of his own people to resist them, as led Columbus to conclude that he would not be alarmed at the proposition of any scheme which afforded him the prospect of an additional security against their attacks. He instantly offered him the assistance of the Spaniards to repel his enemies; he engaged to take him and his people under the protection of the powerful monarch whom he served, and offered to leave in the island such a number of his men as should be sufficient, not only to defend the inhabitants from future incursions, but to avenge their past wrongs.

BOOK II. 1492.

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1492. Builds a fort.

THE credulous prince closed eagerly with the proposal, and thought himself already safe under the patronage of beings sprung from Heaven, and superior in power to mortal men. The ground was marked out for a small fort, which Columbus called *Navidad*, because he had landed there on Christmas-day. A deep ditch was drawn around it. The ramparts were fortified with pallisades, and the great guns, saved out of the admiral's ship, were planted upon them. In ten days the work was finished; that simple race of men labouring with inconsiderate assiduity in erecting this first monument of their own servitude. During this time, Columbus, by his caresses and liberality, laboured to increase the high opinion which the natives entertained of the Spaniards. But while he endeavoured to inspire them with confidence in their disposition to do good, he wished likewise to give them some striking idea of their power to punish and destroy such as were the objects of their indignation. With this view, in presence of a vast assembly, he drew up his men in order of battle, and made an ostentatious but innocent display of the sharpness of the Spanish swords, of the force of their spears, and the operation of their cross-bows. These rude people, strangers to the use of iron, and unacquainted with any hostile weapons but arrows

of reeds pointed with the bones of fishes, wooden swords, and javelins hardened in the fire, wondered and trembled. Before this surprise or fear had time to abate, he ordered the great guns to be fired. The sudden explosion struck them with such terror, that they fell flat to the ground, covering their faces with their hands; and when they beheld the astonishing effect of the bullets among the trees, towards which the cannon had been pointed, they concluded that it was impossible to resist men, who had the command of such destructive instruments, and who came armed with thunder and lightning against their enemies. 1492.

His instructions to those he left in it.

After giving such impressions both of the beneficence and power of the Spaniards, as might have rendered it easy to preserve an ascendant over the minds of the natives, Columbus appointed thirty-eight of his people to remain in the island. He intrusted the command of these to Diego de Arado, a gentleman of Cordova, investing him with the same powers which he himself had received from Ferdinand and Isabella; and furnished him with every thing requisite for the subsistence or defence of this infant colony. He strictly enjoined them to maintain concord among themselves, to yield an unreserved obedience to their commander, to avoid giving offence

BOOK II. 1492. to the natives by any violence or exaction, to cultivate the friendship of Guacanahari, but not to put themselves in his power, by straggling in small parties, or marching too far from the fort. He promised to revisit them soon, with such a reinforcement of strength as might enable them to take full possession of the country, and to reap all the fruits of their discoveries. In the mean time, he engaged to mention their names to the King and Queen, and to place their merit and services in the most advantageous light.[b]

HAVING thus taken every precaution for the security of the colony, he left Navidad on the 1493. fourth of January, one thousand four hundred and ninety-three, and steering towards the east, discovered, and gave names to most of the harbours on the northern coast of the island. On the sixth he descried the Pinta, and soon came up with her, after a separation of more than six weeks. Pinzon endeavoured to justify his conduct, by pretending that he had been driven from his course by stress of weather, and prevented from returning by contrary winds. The admiral, though he still suspected his perfidious intentions, and knew well what he urged in his own defence to be

[b] Oviedo ap. Ramusio, iii. p. 82. E. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 20. Life of Columbus, c. 34.

frivolous as well as false, was so sensible that this was not a proper time for venturing upon any high strain of authority, and felt such satisfaction in this junction with his consort, which delivered him from many disquieting apprehensions, that, lame as Pinzon's apology was, he admitted of it without difficulty, and restored him to favour. During his absence from the admiral, Pinzon had visited several harbours in the island, had acquired some gold by trafficking with the natives, but had made no discovery of any importance. 1493.

Resolves to return to Europe.

FROM the condition of his ships, as well as the temper of his men, Columbus now found it necessary to hasten his return to Europe. The former having suffered much during a voyage of such an unusual length, were extremely leaky. The latter expressed the utmost impatience to revisit their native country, from which they had been so long absent, and where they had things so wonderful and unheard-of to relate. Accordingly, on the sixteenth of January, he directed his course towards the north-east, and soon lost sight of land. He had on board some of the natives, whom he had taken from the different islands which he discovered; and besides the gold, which was the chief object of research, he had collected specimens of all the productions

BOOK II. 1498.

which were likely to become subjects of commerce in the several countries, as well as many unknown birds, and other natural curiosities, which might attract the attention of the learned, or excite the wonder of the people. The voyage was prosperous to the fourteenth of February, and he had advanced near five hundred leagues across the Atlantic ocean, when the wind began to rise, and continued to blow with increasing rage, which terminated in a furious hurricane. Every thing that the naval skill and experience of Columbus could devise was employed, in order to save the ships. But it was impossible to withstand the violence of the storm, and, as they were still far from any land, destruction seemed inevitable. The sailors had recourse to prayers to Almighty God, to the invocation of saints, to vows and charms, to every thing that religion dictates, or superstition suggests, to the affrighted mind of man. No prospect of deliverance appearing, they abandoned themselves to despair, and expected every moment to be swallowed up in the waves. Besides the passions which naturally agitate and alarm the human mind in such awful situations, when certain death, in one of his most terrible forms, is before it, Columbus had to endure feelings of distress peculiar to himself. He dreaded that all knowledge of the amazing discoveries

A violent storm arises.

The conduct of Columbus.

which he had made was now to perish; mankind were to be deprived of every benefit that might have been derived from the happy success of his schemes, and his own name would descend to posterity as that of a rash deluded adventurer, instead of being transmitted with the honour due to the author and conductor of the most noble enterprise that had ever been undertaken. These reflections extinguished all sense of his own personal danger. Less affected with the loss of life, than solicitous to preserve the memory of what he had attempted and achieved, he retired to his cabin, and wrote, upon parchment, a short account of the voyage which he had made, of the course which he had taken, of the situation and riches of the countries which he had discovered, and of the colony that he had left there. Having wrapped up this in an oiled cloth, which he inclosed in a cake of wax, he put it into a cask carefully stopped up, and threw it into the sea, in hopes that some fortunate accident might preserve a deposit of so much importance to the world.[c] 1493.

Takes shelter in the Azores.

At length Providence interposed, to save a life reserved for other services. The wind

[c] Life of Columbus, c. 97. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 1, 2. See NOTE XVI.

BOOK II. 1493. abated, the sea became calm, and on the evening of the fifteenth, Columbus and his companions discovered land; and though uncertain what it was, they made towards it. They soon knew it to be St. Mary, one of the Azores or western isles, subject to the crown of Portugal. There, after a violent contest with the governor, in which Columbus displayed no less spirit than prudence, he obtained a supply of fresh provisions, and whatever else he needed. One circumstance, however, greatly disquieted him. The Pinta, of which he had lost sight on the first day of the hurricane, did not appear; he dreaded for some time that she had foundered at sea, and that all her crew had perished; afterwards, his former suspicions recurred, and he became apprehensive that Pinzon had borne away for Spain, that he might reach it before him, and, by giving the first account of his discoveries, might obtain some share of his fame.

Feb. 24. Arrives at Lisbon. In order to prevent this, he left the Azores as soon as the weather would permit. At no great distance from the coast of Spain, when near the end of his voyage, and seemingly beyond the reach of any disaster, another storm arose, little inferior to the former in violence; and after driving before it during two days

and two nights, he was forced to take shelter in the river Tagus. Upon application to the King of Portugal, he was allowed to come up to Lisbon; and, notwithstanding the envy which it was natural for the Portuguese to feel, when they beheld another nation entering upon that province of discovery which they had hitherto deemed peculiarly their own, and in its first essay, not only rivalling, but eclipsing their fame, Columbus was received with all the marks of distinction due to a man who had performed things so extraordinary and unexpected. The King admitted him into his presence, treated him with the highest respect, and listened to the account which he gave of his voyage with admiration mingled with regret. While Columbus, on his part, enjoyed the satisfaction of describing the importance of his discoveries, and of being now able to prove the solidity of his schemes to those very persons, who, with an ignorance disgraceful to themselves, and fatal to their country, had lately rejected them as the projects of a visionary or designing adventurer.[d]

1493. March 4.

COLUMBUS was so impatient to return to Spain, that he remained only five days in Lisbon. On the fifteenth of March he arrived

Return to Spain.

[d] Life of Columbus, c. 40, 41. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 3.

BOOK II. 1493.

in the port of Palos, seven months and eleven days from the time when he set out thence upon his voyage. As soon as the ship was discovered approaching the port, all the inhabitants of Palos ran eagerly to the shore, in order to welcome their relations and fellow-citizens, and to hear tidings of their voyage. When the prosperous issue of it was known, when they beheld the strange people, the unknown animals, and singular productions, brought from the countries which had been discovered, the effusion of joy was general and unbounded. The bells were rung, the cannon fired; Columbus was received at landing with royal honours, and all the people in solemn procession, accompanied him and his crew to the church, where they returned thanks to Heaven, which had so wonderfully conducted and crowned with success a voyage of greater length and of more importance than had been attempted in any former age. On the evening of the same day, he had the satisfaction of seeing the Pinta, which the violence of the tempest had driven far to the north, enter the harbour.

His reception.

THE first care of Columbus was to inform the King and Queen, who were then at Barcelona, of his arrival and success. Ferdinand and Isabella, no less astonished than delighted

with this unexpected event, desired Columbus, in terms the most respectful and flattering, to repair immediately to court, that from his own mouth they might receive a full detail of his extraordinary services and discoveries. During his journey to Barcelona, the people crowded from the adjacent country, following him every where with admiration and applause. His entrance into the city was conducted, by order of Ferdinand and Isabella, with pomp suitable to the great event, which added such distinguishing lustre to their reign. The people whom he brought along with him from the countries which he had discovered, marched first, and by their singular complexion, the wild peculiarity of their features, and uncouth finery, appeared like men of another species. Next to them were carried the ornaments of gold, fashioned by the rude art of the natives, the grains of gold found in the mountains, and dust of the same metal gathered in the rivers. After these appeared the various commodities of the new discovered countries, together with their curious productions. Columbus himself closed the procession, and attracted the eyes of all the spectators, who gazed with admiration on the extraordinary man, whose superior sagacity and fortitude had conducted their countrymen, by a route concealed from past ages, to the knowledge

BOOK II. 1493.

of a new world. Ferdinand and Isabella received him clad in their royal robes, and seated upon a throne, under a magnificent canopy. When he approached, they stood up, and raising him as he kneeled to kiss their hands, commanded him to take his seat upon a chair prepared for him, and to give a circumstantial account of his voyage. He delivered it with a gravity and composure no less suitable to the disposition of the Spanish nation, than to the dignity of the audience in which he spoke, and with that modest simplicity which characterises men of superior minds, who, satisfied with having performed great actions, court not vain applause by an ostentatious display of their exploits. When he had finished his narration, the King and Queen, kneeling down, offered up solemn thanks to Almighty God for the discovery of those new regions, from which they expected so many advantages to flow in upon the kingdoms subject to their government.* Every mark of honour that gratitude or admiration could suggest was conferred upon Columbus. Letters patent were issued, confirming to him and to his heirs all the privileges contained in the capitulation concluded at Santa Fé; his family was ennobled; the King and Queen,

* See NOTE XVII.

and, after their example, the courtiers treated him, on every occasion, with all the ceremonious respect paid to persons of the highest rank. But what pleased him most, as it gratified his active mind, bent continually upon great objects, was an order to equip, without delay, an armament of such force, as might enable him not only to take possession of the countries which he had already discovered, but to go in search of those more opulent regions, which he still confidently expected to find.[f] 1493.

Astonishment of mankind at his discoveries.

WHILE preparations were making for this expedition, the fame of Columbus's successful voyage spread over Europe, and excited general attention. The multitude, struck with amazement when they heard that a new world had been found, could hardly believe an event so much above their conception. Men of science, capable of comprehending the nature, and of discerning the effects of this great discovery, received the account of it with admiration and joy. They spoke of his voyage with rapture, and congratulated one another upon their felicity, in having lived in the period when, by this extraordinary event, the boundaries of human know-

[f] Life of Columbus, c. 42, 43. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 3.

BOOK II. 1493.

ledge were so much extended, and such a new field of inquiry and observation opened, as would lead mankind to a perfect acquaintance with the structure and productions of the habitable globe.[g] Various opinions and conjectures were formed concerning the newfound countries, and what division of the earth they belonged to. Columbus adhered tenaciously to his original opinion, that they should be reckoned a part of those vast regions in Asia, comprehended under the general name of India. This sentiment was confirmed by the observations which he made concerning the productions of the countries he had discovered. Gold was known to abound in India, and he had met with such promising samples of it in the islands which he visited, as led him to believe that rich mines of it might be found. Cotton, another production of the East-Indies, was common there. The pimento of the islands he imagined to be a species of the East-Indian pepper. He mistook a root, somewhat resembling rhubarb, for that valuable drug, which was then supposed to be a plant peculiar to the East-Indies.[h] The birds brought home by him were adorned with the same rich plumage which distinguishes those of India. The alligator of the one country

[g] P. Mart. epist. 133, 134, 135. See NOTE XVIII.

[h] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 20. Gomera Hist. c. 17.

appeared to be the same with the crocodile of the other. After weighing all these circumstances, not only the Spaniards, but the other nations of Europe, seem to have adopted the opinion of Columbus. The countries which he had discovered were considered as a part of India. In consequence of this notion, the name of Indies is given to them by Ferdinand and Isabella, in a ratification of their former agreement, which was granted to Columbus upon his return.[1] Even after the error which gave rise to this opinion was detected, and the true position of the New World was ascertained, the name has remained, and the appellation of *West-Indies* is given by all the people of Europe to the country, and that of *Indians* to its inhabitants.

1493.

Distinguished by the name of the West-Indies.

THE name by which Columbus distinguished the countries which he had discovered was so inviting, the specimens of their riches and fertility, which he produced, were so considerable, and the reports of his companions, delivered frequently with the exaggeration natural to travellers, so favourable, as to excite a wonderful spirit of enterprise among the Spaniards. Though little accustomed to naval expeditions, they were impatient to set out

Preparations for a second voyage.

[1] Life of Columbus, c. 44.

BOOK II. 1493.

with their situation, and ignorant even of their existence. As it was necessary to prevent this grant from interfering with that formerly made to the crown of Portugal, he appointed that a line, supposed to be drawn from pole to pole, a hundred leagues to the westward of the Azores, should serve as a limit between them; and, in the plenitude of his power, bestowed all to the east of this imaginary line upon the Portuguese, and all to the west of it, upon the Spaniards.[1] Zeal for propagating the Christian faith was the consideration employed by Ferdinand in soliciting this bull, and is mentioned by Alexander as his chief motive for issuing it. In order to manifest some concern for this laudable object, several friars, under the direction of Father Boyl, a Catalonian monk of great reputation, as apostolical vicar, were appointed to accompany Columbus, and to devote themselves to the instruction of the natives. The Indians, whom Columbus had brought along with him, having received some tincture of Christian knowledge, were baptized with much solemnity, the King himself, the Prince his son, and the chief persons of his court, standing as their godfathers. Those first fruits of the New World have not been followed by

[1] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 4. Torquemada Mon. Ind. lib. xviii. c. 3.

such an increase as pious men wished, and had reason to expect. BOOK II. 1493.

Second voyage of Columbus.

FERDINAND and Isabella having thus acquired a title, which was then deemed completely valid, to extend their discoveries and to establish their dominion over such a considerable portion of the globe, nothing now retarded the departure of the fleet. Columbus was extremely impatient to revisit the colony which he had left, and to pursue that career of glory upon which he had entered. He set sail from the bay of Cadiz on the twenty-fifth of September, and touching again at the island of Gomera, he steered farther towards the south than in his former voyage. By holding this course, he enjoyed more steadily the benefit of the regular winds, which reign within the tropics, and was carried towards a larger cluster of islands, situated considerably to the east of those which he had already discovered. On the twenty-sixth day after his departure from Gomera, he made land.[m] It was one of the Caribbee or Leeward Islands, to which he gave the name of Deseada, on account of the impatience of his crew to discover some part of the New World. After this he visited successively Dominica, Marigalante, Guadaloupe, Nov. 2.

[m] Oviedo ap. Ramus. iii. 85.

BOOK II. 1495.

Antigua, San Juan de Puerto Rico, and several other islands, scattered in his way as he advanced towards the north-west. All these he found to be inhabited by that fierce race of people whom Guacanahari had painted in such frightful colours. His descriptions appeared not to have been exaggerated. The Spaniards never attempted to land without meeting with such a reception, as discovered the martial and daring spirit of the natives; and in their habitations were found relics of those horrid feasts which they had made upon the bodies of their enemies taken in war.

Arrives at Hispaniola, Nov. 22.

But as Columbus was eager to know the state of the colony which he had planted, and to supply it with the necessaries of which he supposed it to be in want, he made no stay in any of those islands, and proceeded directly to Hispaniola.[a] When he arrived off Navidad, the station in which he had left the thirty-eight men under the command of Arada, he was astonished that none of them appeared, and expected every moment to see them running with transports of joy to welcome their countrymen. Full of solicitude about their safety, and foreboding in his mind what had befallen

[a] P. Martyr, dec. p. 15. 18. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 7. Life of Columbus, c. 46, &c.

them, he rowed instantly to land. All the natives from whom he might have received information had fled. But the fort which he had built was entirely demolished, and the tattered garments, the broken arms and utensils scattered about it, left no room to doubt concerning the unhappy fate of the garrison.° While the Spaniards were shedding tears over those sad memorials of their fellow-citizens, a brother of the cazique Guacanahari arrived. From him Columbus received a particular detail of what had happened after his departure from the island. The familiar intercourse of the Indians with the Spaniards tended gradually to diminish the superstitious veneration with which their first appearance had inspired that simple people. By their own indiscretion and ill conduct, the Spaniards speedily effaced those favourable impressions, and soon convinced the natives, that they had all the wants, and weaknesses, and passions of men. As soon as the powerful restraint which the presence and authority of Columbus imposed was withdrawn, the garrison threw off all regard for the officer whom he had invested with command. Regardless of the prudent instructions which he had given them, every man became independent, and gratified his desires without control. The

1493.

The fate of the men whom he left there.

° Hist. de Cura de los Palacios. MS.

BOOK II. 1493.

gold, the women, the provisions of the natives, were all the prey of those licentious oppressors. They roamed in small parties over the island, extending their rapacity and insolence to every corner of it. Gentle and timid as the people were, those unprovoked injuries at length exhausted their patience, and roused their courage. The cazique of Cibao, whose country the Spaniards chiefly infested on account of the gold which it contained, surprised and cut off several of them, while they straggled in as perfect security as if their conduct had been altogether inoffensive. He then assembled his subjects, and surrounding the fort, set it on fire. Some of the Spaniards were killed in defending it, the rest perished in attempting to make their escape by crossing an arm of the sea. Guacanahari, whom all their exactions had not alienated from the Spaniards, took arms in their behalf, and, in endeavouring to protect them, had received a wound, by which he was still confined.[p]

His prudent conduct.

THOUGH this account was far from removing the suspicions which the Spaniards entertained with respect to the fidelity of Guacanahari, Columbus perceived so clearly that this was

[p] P. Martyr, dec. p. 22, &c. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 7. 9. Life of Columbus, c. 49, 50.

not a proper juncture for enquiring into his conduct with scrupulous accuracy, that he rejected the advice of several of his officers, who urged him to seize the person of that Prince, and to revenge the death of their countrymen by attacking his subjects. He represented to them the necessity of securing the friendship of some potentate of the country, in order to facilitate the settlement which they intended, and the danger of driving the natives to unite in some desperate attempt against them, by such an ill-timed and unavailing exercise of rigour. Instead of wasting his time in punishing past wrongs, he took precautions for preventing any future injury. With this view he made choice of a situation more healthy and commodious than that of Navidad. He traced out the plan of a town in a large plain near a spacious bay, and obliging every person to put his hand to a work on which their common safety depended, the houses and ramparts were soon so far advanced by their united labour, as to afford them shelter and security. This rising city, the first that the Europeans founded in the New World, he named Isabella, in honour of his patroness the Queen of Castile.[q]

BOOK II. 1495.

[q] Life of Columbus, c. 51. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 10.

BOOK II.

1495. Discontent of his followers.

In carrying on this necessary work, Columbus had not only to sustain all the hardships, and to encounter all the difficulties, to which infant colonies are exposed when they settle in an uncultivated country, but he had to contend with what was more insuperable, the laziness, the impatience, and mutinous disposition of his followers. By the enervating influence of a hot climate, the natural inactivity of the Spaniards seemed to increase. Many of them were gentlemen, unaccustomed to the fatigue of bodily labour, and all had engaged in the enterprise with the sanguine hopes excited by the splendid and exaggerated description of their countrymen who returned from the first voyage, or by the mistaken opinion of Columbus, that the country which he had discovered was either the Cipango of Marco Polo, or the Ophir[r], from which Solomon imported those precious commodities which suddenly diffused such extraordinary riches through his kingdom. But when, instead of that golden harvest which they had expected to reap without toil or pains, the Spaniards saw that their prospect of wealth was remote as well as uncertain, and that it could not be attained but by the slow and persevering efforts of industry,

[r] P. Martyr, dec. p. 29.

the disappointment of those chimerical hopes occasioned such dejection of mind as bordered on despair, and led to general discontent. In vain did Columbus endeavour to revive their spirits by pointing out the fertility of the soil, and exhibiting the specimens of gold daily brought in from different parts of the island. They had not patience to wait for the gradual returns which the former might yield, and the latter they despised as scanty and inconsiderable. The spirit of disaffection spread, and a conspiracy was formed, which might have been fatal to Columbus and the colony. Happily he discovered it; and, seizing the ringleaders, punished some of them, sent others prisoners into Spain, whither he dispatched twelve of the ships which had served as transports, with an earnest request for a re-enforcement of men and a large supply of provisions.[s] 1493.

1494. Examines into the state of the country.

MEANWHILE, in order to banish that idleness, which, by allowing his people leisure to brood over their disappointment, nourished the spirit of discontent, Columbus planned several expeditions into the interior part of the country. He sent a detachment, under the command of Alonzo de Ojeda, a vigilant and enterprising officer, to visit the district of Cibao, which was

[s] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 10, 11.

BOOK II. 1494. March 12.

said to yield the greatest quantity of gold, and followed him in person with the main body of his troops. In this expedition he displayed all the pomp of military magnificence, that he could exhibit, in order to strike the imagination of the natives. He marched with colours flying, with martial music, and with a small body of cavalry that paraded sometimes in the front and sometimes in the rear. As those were the first horses which appeared in the New World, they were objects of terror no less than of admiration to the Indians, who, having no tame animals themselves, were unacquainted with that vast accession of power which man hath acquired by subjecting them to his dominion. They supposed them to be rational creatures. They imagined that the horse and the rider formed one animal, with whose speed they were astonished, and whose impetuosity and strength they considered as irresistible. But while Columbus endeavoured to inspire the natives with a dread of his power, he did not neglect the arts of gaining their love and confidence. He adhered scrupulously to the principles of integrity and justice in all his transactions with them, and treated them, on every occasion, not only with humanity, but with indulgence. The district of Cibao answered the description given of it by the natives. It was mountainous

and uncultivated, but in every river and brook gold was gathered either in dust or in grains, some of which were of considerable size. The Indians had never opened any mines in search of gold. To penetrate into the bowels of the earth, and to refine the rude ore, were operations too complicated and laborious for their talents and industry, and they had no such high value for gold as to put their ingenuity and invention upon the stretch in order to obtain it.[t] The small quantity of that precious metal which they possessed, was either picked up in the beds of the rivers, or washed from the mountains by the heavy rains that fall within the tropics. But, from those indications, the Spaniards could no longer doubt that the country contained rich treasures in its bowels, of which they hoped soon to be masters.[u] In order to secure the command of this valuable province, Columbus erected a small fort, to which he gave the name of St. Thomas, by way of ridicule upon some of his incredulous followers, who would not believe that the country produced gold, until they saw it with their own eyes, and touched it with their hands.[w]

[t] Oviedo, lib. ii. p. 90. A.

[u] P. Martyr, dec. p. 32.

[w] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 12. Life of Columbus, c. 52.

BOOK II.

1494.

THE account of those promising appearances of wealth in the country of Cibao came very seasonably to comfort the desponding colony, which was affected with distresses of various kinds. The stock of provisions which had been brought from Europe was mostly consumed; what remained was so much corrupted by the heat and moisture of the climate, as to be almost unfit for use; the natives cultivated so small a portion of ground, and with so little skill, that it hardly yielded what was sufficient for their own subsistence; the Spaniards at Isabella had hitherto neither time nor leisure to clear the soil, so as to reap any considerable fruits of their own industry. On all these accounts, they became afraid of perishing with hunger, and were reduced already to a scanty allowance. At the same time, the diseases predominant in the torrid zone, and which rage chiefly in those uncultivated countries, where the hand of industry has not opened the woods, drained the marshes, and confined the rivers within a certain channel, began to spread among them. Alarmed at the violence and unusual symptoms of those maladies, they exclaimed against Columbus and his companions in the former voyage, who, by their splendid but deceitful descriptions of Hispaniola, had allured them to quit Spain for a barbarous uncultivated

The distress and disaffection of the colony increase.

land, where they must either be cut off by famine, or die of unknown distempers. Several of the officers and persons of note, instead of checking, joined in those seditious complaints. Father Boyl, the apostolical vicar, was one of the most turbulent and outrageous. It required all the authority and address of Columbus to re-establish subordination and tranquillity in the colony. Threats and promises were alternately employed for this purpose; but nothing contributed more to soothe the malecontents, than the prospect of finding in the mines of Cibao, such a rich store of treasure as would be a recompense for all their sufferings, and efface the memory of former disappointments.

BOOK II. 1494.

When, by his unwearied endeavours, concord and order were so far restored, that he could venture to leave the island, Columbus resolved to pursue his discoveries, that he might be able to ascertain whether those new countries with which he had opened a communication were connected with any region of the earth already known, or whether they were to be considered as a separate portion of the globe hitherto unvisited. He appointed his brother Don Diego, with the assistance of a council of officers, to govern the island in

Columbus attempts new discoveries.

BOOK II. his absence; and gave the command of a body of soldiers to Don Pedro Margarita, with 1494. which he was to visit the different parts of the island, and endeavour to establish the authority of the Spaniards among the inhabitants. Having left them very particular instructions with respect to their conduct, he weighed anchor on the twenty-fourth of April, with one ship and two small barks, under his command. During a tedious voyage of full five months, he had a trial of almost all the numerous hardships to which persons of his profession are exposed, without making any discovery of importance, except the island of Jamaica. As he ranged along the southern coast of Cuba[x], he was entangled in a labyrinth formed by an incredible number of small islands, to which he gave the name of the Queen's Garden. In this unknown course, among rocks and shelves, he was retarded by contrary winds, assaulted with furious storms, and alarmed with the terrible thunder and lightning which is often almost incessant between the tropics. At length his provisions fell short; his crew, exhausted with fatigue as well as hunger, murmured and threatened, and were ready to proceed to the most desperate extremities against him. Beset with danger in

[x] See NOTE XIX.

such various forms, he was obliged to keep continual watch, to observe every occurrence with his own eyes, to issue every order, and to superintend the execution of it. On no occasion was the extent of his skill and experience as a navigator so much tried. To these the squadron owed its safety. But this unremitted fatigue of body, and intense application of mind, overpowering his constitution, though naturally vigorous and robust, brought on a feverish disorder, which terminated in a lethargy, that deprived him of sense and memory, and had almost proved fatal to his life.[y] 1494.

Sept. 27. On his return, finds his brother Bartholomew at Isabella.

But, on his return to Hispaniola, the sudden emotion of joy which he felt upon meeting with his brother Bartholomew at Isabella, occasioned such a flow of spirits as contributed greatly to his recovery. It was now thirteen years since the two brothers, whom similarity of talents united in close friendship, had separated from each other, and during that long period there had been no intercourse between them. Bartholomew, after finishing his negotiation in the court of England, had set out for Spain by the way of France. At Paris he received an account of the extraordinary discoveries

[y] Life of Columbus, c. 54, &c. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 13, 14. P. Martyr, dec. p. 34, &c.

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which his brother had made in his first voyage, and that he was then preparing to embark on a second expedition. Though this naturally induced him to pursue his journey with the utmost dispatch, the admiral had sailed for Hispaniola before he reached Spain. Ferdinand and Isabella received him with the respect due to the nearest kinsman of a person whose merit and services rendered him so conspicuous; and as they knew what consolation his presence would afford to his brother, they persuaded him to take the command of three ships, which they had appointed to carry provisions to the colony at Isabella.[z]

The Indians take arms against the Spaniards.

He could not have arrived at any juncture when Columbus stood more in need of a friend capable of assisting him with his counsels, or of dividing with him the cares and burden of government. For although the provisions now brought from Europe, afforded a temporary relief to the Spaniards from the calamities of famine, the supply was not in such quantity as to support them long, and the island did not hitherto yield what was sufficient for their sustenance. They were threatened with another danger, still more formidable than the return

[z] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 15.

of scarcity, and which demanded more immediate attention. No sooner did Columbus leave the island on his voyage of discovery, than the soldiers under Margarita, as if they had been set free from discipline and subordination, scorned all restraint. Instead of conforming to the prudent instructions of Columbus, they dispersed in straggling parties over the island, lived at discretion upon the natives, wasted their provisions, seized their women, and treated that inoffensive race with all the insolence of military oppression.[a] 1494.

As long as the Indians had any prospect that their sufferings might come to a period by the voluntary departure of the invaders, they submitted in silence, and dissembled their sorrow; but they now perceived that the yoke would be as permanent as it was intolerable. The Spaniards had built a town, and surrounded it with ramparts. They had erected forts in different places. They had enclosed and sown several fields. It was apparent that they came not to visit the country, but to settle in it. Though the number of those strangers was inconsiderable, the state of cultivation among this rude people was so imperfect, and in such exact pro-

[a] P. Martyr, dec. p. 47.

BOOK II. 1494.

portion to their own consumption, that it was with difficulty they could afford subsistence to their new guests. Their own mode of life was so indolent and inactive, the warmth of the climate so enervating, the constitution of their bodies naturally so feeble, and so unaccustomed to the laborious exertions of industry, that they were satisfied with a proportion of food amazingly small. A handful of maize, or a little of the insipid bread made of the cassada-root, was sufficient to support men, whose strength and spirits were not exhausted by any vigorous efforts either of body or mind. The Spaniards, though the most abstemious of all the European nations, appeared to them excessively voracious. One Spaniard consumed as much as several Indians. This keenness of appetite surprised them so much, and seemed to be so insatiable, that they supposed the Spaniards had left their own country, because it did not produce as much as was requisite to gratify their immoderate desire of food, and had come among them in quest of nourishment.[b] Self-preservation prompted them to wish for the departure of guests who wasted so fast their slender stock of provisions. The injuries which they suffered, added to their impatience for this event. They

[b] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 17.

had long expected that the Spaniards would retire of their own accord. They now perceived that, in order to avert the destruction with which they were threatened, either by the slow consumption of famine, or by the violence of their oppressors, it was necessary to assume courage, to attack those formidable invaders with united force, and drive them from the settlements of which they had violently taken possession. 1494.

War with them.

SUCH were the sentiments which universally prevailed among the Indians, when Columbus returned to Isabella. Inflamed by the unprovoked outrages of the Spaniards, with a degree of rage of which their gentle natures, formed to suffer and submit, seemed hardly susceptible, they waited only for a signal from their leaders to fall upon the colony. Some of the caziques had already surprised and cut off several stragglers. The dread of this impending danger united the Spaniards, and reestablished the authority of Columbus, as they saw no prospect of safety but in committing themselves to his prudent guidance. It was now necessary to have recourse to arms, the employing of which against the Indians, Columbus had hitherto avoided with the greatest solicitude. Unequal as the conflict may seem,

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between the naked inhabitants of the New World, armed with clubs, sticks hardened in the fire, wooden swords, and arrows pointed with bones or flints; and troops accustomed to the discipline, and provided with the instruments of destruction known in the European art of war, the situation of the Spaniards was far from being exempt from danger. The vast superiority of the natives in number, compensated many defects. An handful of men was about to encounter a whole nation. One adverse event, or even any unforeseen delay in determining the fate of the war, might prove fatal to the Spaniards. Conscious that success depended on the vigour and rapidity of his operations, Columbus instantly assembled his forces. They were reduced to a very small number. Diseases, engendered by the warmth and humidity of the country, or occasioned by their own licentiousness, had raged among them with much violence; experience had not yet taught them the art either of curing these, or the precautions requisite for guarding against them; two-thirds of the original adventurers were dead, and many of those who survived were incapable of service.[c] The body which took the field consisted only of two hundred foot, twenty horse, and twenty large

1495. March 24.

[c] Life of Columbus, c. 61.

dogs; and how strange soever it may seem, to mention the last as composing part of a military force, they were not perhaps the least formidable and destructive of the whole, when employed against naked and timid Indians. All the caziques of the island, Guacanahari excepted, who retained an inviolable attachment to the Spaniards, were in arms to oppose Columbus, with forces amounting, if we may believe the Spanish historians, to a hundred thousand men. Instead of attempting to draw the Spaniards into the fastnesses of the woods and mountains, they were so imprudent as to take their station in the Vega Real, the most open plain in the country. Columbus did not allow them time to perceive their error, or to alter their position. He attacked them during the night, when undisciplined troops are least capable of acting with union and concert, and obtained an easy and bloodless victory. The consternation with which the Indians were filled by the noise and havock made by the fire-arms, by the impetuous force of the cavalry, and the fierce onset of the dogs, was so great, that they threw down their weapons, and fled without attempting resistance. Many were slain; more were taken prisoners, and reduced to servitude[d]; and so thoroughly

[d] See NOTE XX.

BOOK II. 1495.

were the rest intimidated, that from that moment they abandoned themselves to despair, relinquishing all thoughts of contending with aggressors whom they deemed invincible.

A tax imposed upon them.

COLUMBUS employed several months in marching through the island, and in subjecting it to the Spanish government, without meeting with any opposition. He imposed a tribute upon all the inhabitants above the age of fourteen. Each person who lived in those districts where gold was found, was obliged to pay quarterly as much gold dust as filled a hawk's bell; from those in other parts of the country, twenty-five pounds of cotton were demanded. This was the first regular taxation of the Indians, and served as a precedent for exactions still more intolerable. Such an imposition was extremely contrary to those maxims which Columbus had hitherto inculcated, with respect to the mode of treating them. But intrigues were carrying on in the court of Spain at this juncture, in order to undermine his power, and discredit his operations, which constrained him to depart from his own system of administration. Several unfavourable accounts of his conduct, as well as of the countries discovered by him, had been transmitted to Spain. Margarita and

Father Boyl were now at court, and in order to justify their own conduct, or to gratify their resentment, watched with malevolent attention for every opportunity of spreading insinuations to his detriment. Many of the courtiers viewed his growing reputation and power with envious eyes. Fonseca, archdeacon of Seville, who was intrusted with the chief direction of Indian affairs, had conceived such an unfavourable opinion of Columbus, for some reason which the contemporary writers have not mentioned, that he listened with partiality to every invective against him. It was not easy for an unfriended stranger, unpractised in courtly arts, to counteract the machinations of so many enemies. Columbus saw that there was but one method of supporting his own credit, and of silencing all his adversaries. He must produce such a quantity of gold as would not only justify what he had reported with respect to the richness of the country, but encourage Ferdinand and Isabella to persevere in prosecuting his plans. The necessity of obtaining it, forced him not only to impose this heavy tax upon the Indians, but to exact payment of it with extreme rigour; and may be pleaded in excuse for his deviating on this occasion from the mildness and humanity with

BOOK II. which he uniformly treated that unhappy people.[a]

1495.

Fatal effects of that measure.

THE labour, attention, and foresight, which the Indians were obliged to employ in procuring the tribute demanded of them, appeared the most intolerable of all evils, to men accustomed to pass their days in a careless, improvident indolence. They were incapable of such a regular and persevering exertion of industry, and felt it such a grievous restraint upon their liberty, that they had recourse to an expedient for obtaining deliverance from this yoke, which demonstrates the excess of their impatience and despair. They formed a scheme of starving those oppressors whom they durst not attempt to expel; and from the opinion which they entertained with respect to the voracious appetite of the Spaniards, they concluded the execution of it to be very practicable. With this view they suspended all the operations of agriculture; they sowed no maize, they pulled up the roots of the manioc or cassada which were planted, and retiring to the most inaccessible parts of the mountains, left the uncultivated plains to their enemies. This desperate resolution

[a] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 17.

produced in some degree the effects which they expected. The Spaniards were reduced to extreme want; but they received such seasonable supplies of provisions from Europe, and found so many resources in their own ingenuity and industry, that they suffered no great loss of men. The wretched Indians were the victims of their own ill-concerted policy. A great multitude of people, shut up in the mountainous or wooded part of the country, without any food but the spontaneous productions of the earth, soon felt the utmost distresses of famine. This brought on contagious diseases; and, in the course of a few months, more than a third part of the inhabitants of the island perished, after experiencing misery in all its various forms.[f] 1495.

Intrigues against Columbus in the court of Spain.

But while Columbus was establishing the foundations of the Spanish grandeur in the New World, his enemies laboured with unwearied assiduity to deprive him of the glory and rewards, which by his services and sufferings he was entitled to enjoy. The hardships unavoidable in a new settlement, the calamities occasioned by an unhealthy climate, the

[f] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. xi. c. 18. Life of Columbus, c. 61. Oviedo, lib. iii. p. 93. D. Benzon Hist. Novi Orbis, lib. i. c. 9. P. Martyr, dec. p. 48.

BOOK II. 1495.

disasters attending a voyage in unknown seas, were all represented as the effects of his restless and inconsiderate ambition. His prudent attention to preserve discipline and subordination was denominated excess of rigour; the punishments which he inflicted upon the mutinous and disorderly were imputed to cruelty. These accusations gained such credit in a jealous court, that a commissioner was appointed to repair to Hispaniola, and to inspect into the conduct of Columbus. By the recommendation of his enemies, Aguado, a groom of the bed-chamber, was the person to whom this important trust was committed. But in this choice they seem to have been more influenced by the obsequious attachment of the man to their interest, than by his capacity for the station. Puffed up with such sudden elevation, Aguado displayed, in the exercise of this office, all the frivolous self-importance, and acted with all the disgusting insolence, which are natural to little minds, when raised to unexpected dignity, or employed in functions to which they are not equal. By listening with eagerness to every accusation against Columbus, and encouraging not only the malcontent Spaniards, but even the Indians, to produce their grievances, real or imaginary, he fomented the spirit of dissension in the island, without establishing any regulations of public

utility, or that tended to redress the many wrongs, with the odium of which he wished to load the admiral's administration. As Columbus felt sensibly how humiliating his situation must be, if he should remain in the country while such a partial inspector observed his motions, and controlled his jurisdiction, he took the resolution of returning to Spain, in order to lay a full account of all his transactions, particularly with respect to the points in dispute between him and his adversaries, before Ferdinand and Isabella, from whose justice and discernment he expected an equal and a favourable decision. He committed the administration of affairs, during his absence, to Don Bartholomew his brother, with the title of Adelantado, or Lieutenant-Governor. By a choice less fortunate, and which proved the source of many calamities to the colony, he appointed Francis Roldan chief justice, with very extensive powers.[s]

1495.

1496.

Returns to Spain.

In returning to Europe, Columbus held a course different from that which he had taken in his former voyage. He steered almost due east from Hispaniola, in the parallel of twenty-two degrees of latitude; as experience had not yet discovered the more certain and ex-

[s] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. 2. c. 18. lib. iii. c. 1.

BOOK II. 1496.

peditious method of stretching to the north, in order to fall in with the south-west winds. By this ill-advised choice, which, in the infancy of navigation between the New and Old Worlds, can hardly be imputed to the admiral as a defect in naval skill, he was exposed to infinite fatigue and danger, in a perpetual struggle with the trade-winds, which blow without variation from the east between the tropics. Notwithstanding the almost insuperable difficulties of such a navigation, he persisted in his course with his usual patience and firmness, but made so little way that he was three months without seeing land. At length his provisions began to fail, the crew was reduced to the scanty allowance of six ounces of bread a-day for each person. The admiral fared no better than the meanest sailor. But, even in this extreme distress, he retained the humanity which distinguishes his character, and refused to comply with the earnest solicitations of his crew, some of whom proposed to feed upon the Indian prisoners whom they were carrying over, and others insisted to throw them overboard, in order to lessen the consumption of their small stock. He represented that they were human beings, reduced by a common calamity to the same condition with themselves, and entitled to share an equal fate. His authority and remonstrances

dissipated those wild ideas suggested by despair. Nor had they time to recur; as he came soon within sight of the coast of Spain, when all their fears and sufferings ended.[h] BOOK II. 1496.

His reception there.

COLUMBUS appeared at court with the modest but determined confidence of a man conscious not only of integrity, but of having performed great services. Ferdinand and Isabella, ashamed of their own facility in lending too favourable an ear to frivolous or unfounded accusations, received him with such distinguished marks of respect as covered his enemies with shame. Their censures and calumnies were no more heard of at that juncture. The gold, the pearls, the cotton, and other commodities of value which Columbus produced, seemed fully to refute what the malcontents had propagated with respect to the poverty of the country. By reducing the Indians to obedience, and imposing a regular tax upon them, he had secured to Spain a large accession of new subjects, and the establishment of a revenue that promised to be considerable. By the mines which he had found out and examined, a source of wealth still more copious was opened. Great and unexpected as those advantages were, Columbus represented them only as preludes to future acqui-

[h] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. i. Life of Columbus, c. 64.

BOOK II. 1496.

sitions, and as the earnest of more important discoveries, which he still meditated, and to which those he had already made would conduct him with ease and certainty.[1]

A plan formed for the more regular establishment of a colony.

THE attentive consideration of all these circumstances made such an impression, not only upon Isabella, who was flattered with the idea of being the patroness of all Columbus's enterprises, but even upon Ferdinand, who having originally expressed his disapprobation of his schemes, was still apt to doubt of their success, that they resolved to supply the colony in Hispaniola with every thing which could render it a permanent establishment, and to furnish Columbus with such a fleet, that he might proceed to search for those new countries, of whose existence he seemed to be confident. The measures most proper for accomplishing both these designs were concerted with Columbus. Discovery had been the sole object of the first voyage to the New World; and though, in the second, settlement had been proposed, the precautions taken for that purpose had either been insufficient, or were rendered ineffectual by the mutinous spirit of the Spaniards, and the unforeseen calamities arising from various causes. Now a

[1] Life of Columbus, c. 65. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 1.

plan was to be formed of a regular colony, that might serve as a model in all future establishments. Every particular was considered with attention, and the whole arranged with a scrupulous accuracy. The precise number of adventurers who should be permitted to embark was fixed. They were to be of different ranks and professions; and the proportion of each was established, according to their usefulness and the wants of the colony. A suitable number of women was to be chosen to accompany these new settlers. As it was the first object to raise provisions in a country where scarcity of food had been the occasion of so much distress, a considerable body of husbandmen was to be carried over. As the Spaniards had then no conception of deriving any benefit from those productions of the New World which have since yielded such large returns of wealth to Europe, but had formed magnificent ideas, and entertained sanguine hopes with respect to the riches contained in the mines which had been discovered, a band of workmen, skilled in the various arts employed in digging and refining the precious metals, was provided. All these emigrants were to receive pay and subsistence for some years, at the public expense.[k] 1496.

[k] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 2.

BOOK II.

1496. A defect in it.

THUS far the regulations were prudent, and well adapted to the end in view. But as it was foreseen that few would engage voluntarily to settle in a country, whose noxious climate had been fatal to so many of their countrymen, Columbus proposed to transport to Hispaniola such malefactors as had been convicted of crimes, which, though capital, were of a less atrocious nature; and that for the future a certain proportion of the offenders usually sent to the gallies, should be condemned to labour in the mines which were to be opened. This advice, given without due reflection, was as inconsiderately adopted. The prisons of Spain were drained, in order to collect members for the intended colony; and the judges empowered to try criminals were instructed to recruit it by their future sentences. It was not, however, with such materials that the foundations of a society, destined to be permanent, should be laid. Industry, sobriety, patience, and mutual confidence, are indispensably requisite in an infant settlement, where purity of morals must contribute more towards establishing order, than the operation or authority of laws. But when such a mixture of what is corrupt is admitted into the original constitution of the political body, the vices of those unsound and incurable members will probably infect the whole, and must certainly

be productive of violent and unhappy effects. This the Spaniards fatally experienced; and the other European nations having successively imitated the practice of Spain in this particular, pernicious consequences have followed in their settlements, which can be imputed to no other cause.[l] 1496.

Executed slowly.

THOUGH Columbus obtained, with great facility and dispatch, the royal approbation of every measure and regulation that he proposed, his endeavours to carry them into execution were so long retarded, as must have tired out the patience of any man less accustomed to encounter and to surmount difficulties. Those delays were occasioned partly by that tedious formality and spirit of procrastination, with which the Spaniards conduct business; and partly by the exhausted state of the treasury, which was drained by the expense of celebrating the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella's only son with Margaret of Austria, and that of Joanna, their second daughter, with Philip Archduke of Austria[m]; but must be chiefly imputed to the malicious arts of Columbus's enemies. Astonished at

[l] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 2. Touron Hist. Gener. de l'Amerique, i. p. 51.

[m] P. Martyr, epist. 168.

BOOK II. 1496.

the reception which he met with upon his return, and overawed by his presence, they gave way, for some time, to a tide of favour too strong for them to oppose. Their enmity, however, was too inveterate to remain long inactive. They resumed their operations, and by the assistance of Fonseca, the minister for Indian affairs, who was now promoted to the bishopric of Badajos, they threw in so many obstacles to protract the preparations for Columbus's expedition, that a year elapsed [a] before he could procure two ships to carry over a part of the supplies destined for the colony, and almost two years were spent before the small squadron was equipped, of which he himself was to take the command.[o]

1498. Third voyage of Columbus.

THIS squadron consisted of six ships only, of no great burden, and but indifferently provided for a long or dangerous navigation. The voyage which he now meditated was in a course different from any he had undertaken. As he was fully persuaded that the fertile regions of India lay to the south-west of those countries which he had discovered, he proposed as the most certain method of finding out these, to stand directly south from the Canary or Cape

[a] Life of Columbus, c. 65.
[o] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 9.

de Verd islands, until he came under the equinoctial line, and then to stretch to the west before the favourable wind for such a course, which blows invariably between the tropics. With this idea he set sail, and touched first at the Canary, and then at the Cape de Verd islands. From the former he dispatched three of his ships with a supply of provisions for the colony in Hispaniola: with the other three, he continued his voyage towards the south. No remarkable occurrence happened until they arrived within five degrees of the line. There they were becalmed, and at the same time the heat became so excessive, that many of their wine casks burst, the liquors in others soured, and their provisions corrupted.[p] The Spaniards, who had never ventured so far to the south, were afraid that the ships would take fire, and began to apprehend the reality of what the ancients had taught concerning the destructive qualities of that torrid region of the globe. They were relieved, in some measure, from their fears by a seasonable fall of rain. This, however, though so heavy and unintermitting that the men could hardly keep the deck, did not greatly mitigate the intenseness of the heat.

BOOK II. 1498.

May 30.

July 4.

July 19.

[p] P. Martyr, dec. p. 70.

BOOK II. 1498.

The admiral, who with his usual vigilance had in person directed every operation from the beginning of the voyage, was so much exhausted by fatigue and want of sleep, that it brought on a violent fit of the gout, accompanied with a fever. All these circumstances constrained him to yield to the importunities of his crew, and to alter his course to the north-west, in order to reach some of the Caribbee islands, where he might refit, and be supplied with provisions.

Discovers the continent of America.

On the first of August, the man stationed in the round top surprised them with the joyful cry of *Land!* They stood towards it, and discovered a considerable island, which the admiral called Trinidad, a name it still retains. It lies on the coast of Guiana, near the mouth of the Orinoco. This, though a river only of the third or fourth magnitude in the New World, far surpasses any of the streams in our hemisphere. It rolls towards the ocean such a vast body of water, and rushes into it with such impetuous force, that when it meets the tide, which on that coast rises to an uncommon height, their collision occasions a swell and agitation of the waves no less surprising than formidable. In this conflict, the irresistible torrent of the river so far prevails, that it

freshens the ocean many leagues with its flood.[q] Columbus, before he could conceive the danger, was entangled among those adverse currents and tempestuous waves, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he escaped through a narrow strait, which appeared so tremendous, that he called it La Boca del Drago. As soon as the consternation which this occasioned, permitted him to reflect upon the nature of an appearance so extraordinary, he discerned in it a source of comfort and hope. He justly concluded that such a vast body of water as this river contained, could not be supplied by any island, but must flow through a country of immense extent, and of consequence that he was now arrived at that continent which it had long been the object of his wishes to discover. Full of this idea, he stood to the west along the coast of those provinces which are now known by the names of Paria and Cumana. He landed in several places, and had some intercourse with the people, who resembled those of Hispaniola in their appearance and manner of life. They wore, as ornaments, small plates of gold, and pearls of considerable value, which they willingly exchanged for European toys. They seemed to possess a better understanding, and greater courage, than the inhabitants of

BOOK II. 1498.

[q] Gumilla Hist. de l'Orenoque, tom. i. p. 14.

BOOK II. 1498.

the islands. The country produced four-footed animals of several kinds, as well as a great variety of fowls and fruits.[r] The admiral was so much delighted with its beauty and fertility, that with the warm enthusiasm of a discoverer, he imagined it to be the Paradise described in Scripture, which the Almighty chose for the residence of man, while he retained innocence that rendered him worthy of such an habitation.[s] Thus Columbus had the glory not only of discovering to mankind the existence of a New World, but made considerable progress towards a perfect knowledge of it; and was the first man who conducted the Spaniards to that vast continent which had been the chief seat of their empire, and the source of their treasures in this quarter of the globe. The shattered condition of his ships, scarcity of provisions, his own infirmities, together with the impatience of his crew, prevented him from pursuing his discoveries any farther, and made it necessary to bear away for Hispaniola. In his way thither he discovered the islands of Cubagua and Margarita, which afterwards became remarkable for their pearl-

[r] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 9, 10, 11: Life of Columbus, c. 66—73.

[s] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 12. & Gomara, c. 84. See NOTE XXI.

fishery. When he arrived at Hispaniola, he was wasted to an extreme degree with fatigue and sickness; but found the affairs of the colony in such a situation, as afforded him no prospect of enjoying that repose of which he stood so much in need. 1498. Aug. 30.

State of Hispaniola on his arrival there.

MANY revolutions had happened in that country during his absence. His brother, the adelantado, in consequence of an advice which the admiral gave before his departure, had removed the colony from Isabella to a more commodious station, on the opposite side of the island, and laid the foundation of St. Domingo[u], which was long the most considerable European town in the New World, and the seat of the supreme courts in the Spanish dominions there. As soon as the Spaniards were established in this new settlement, the adelantado, that they might neither languish in inactivity, nor have leisure to form new cabals, marched into those parts of the island which his brother had not yet visited or reduced to obedience. As the people were unable to resist, they submitted every where to the tribute which he imposed. But they soon found the burden to be so intolerable, that, overawed as they were by the superior power

[u] P. Martyr, dec. p. 56.

BOOK II. 1498.

of their oppressors, they took arms against them. Those insurrections, however, were not formidable. A conflict with timid and naked Indians was neither dangerous nor of doubtful issue.

Mutiny of Roldan.

But while the adelantado was employed against them in the field, a mutiny of an aspect far more alarming, broke out among the Spaniards. The ringleader of it was Francis Roldan, whom Columbus had placed in a station which required him to be the guardian of order and tranquillity in the colony. A turbulent and inconsiderate ambition precipitated him into this desperate measure, so unbecoming his rank. The arguments which he employed to seduce his countrymen were frivolous and ill-founded. He accused Columbus and his two brothers of arrogance and severity; he pretended that they aimed at establishing an independent dominion in the country; he taxed them with an intention of cutting off part of the Spaniards by hunger and fatigue, that they might more easily reduce the remainder to subjection; he represented it as unworthy of Castilians, to remain the tame and passive slaves of three Genoese adventurers. As men have always a propensity to impute the hardships of which they feel the pressure, to the misconduct of their rulers; as every nation views with a jealous eye the power and exaltation of foreign-

ers, Roldan's insinuations made a deep impression on his countrymen. His character and rank added weight to them. A considerable number of the Spaniards made choice of him as their leader; and, taking arms against the adelantado and his brother, seized the King's magazine of provisions, and endeavoured to surprise the fort at St. Domingo. This was preserved by the vigilance and courage of Don Diego Columbus. The mutineers were obliged to retire to the province of Xaragua, where they continued not only to disclaim the adelantado's authority themselves, but excited the Indians to throw off the yoke.[w] 1498.

Such was the distracted state of the colony when Columbus landed at St. Domingo. He was astonished to find that the three ships which he had dispatched from the Canaries were not yet arrived. By the unskilfulness of the pilots, and the violence of currents, they had been carried a hundred and sixty miles to the west of St. Domingo, and forced to take shelter in a harbour of the province of Xaragua, where Roldan and his seditious followers were cantoned. Roldan carefully concealed from the commanders of the ships his insurrection

[w] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 5—8. Life of Columbus, c. 74—77. Gomara, c. 23. P. Martyr, p. 78.

BOOK II. 1498.

against the adelantado, and employing his utmost address to gain their confidence, persuaded them to set on shore a considerable part of the new settlers whom they brought over, that they might proceed by land to St. Domingo. It required but few arguments to prevail with those men to espouse his cause. They were the refuse of the gaols of Spain, to whom idleness, licentiousness, and deeds of violence were familiar; and they returned eagerly to a course of life nearly resembling that to which they had been accustomed. The commanders of the ships perceiving, when it was too late, their imprudence in disembarking so many of their men, stood away for St. Domingo, and got safe into the port a few days after the admiral; but their stock of provisions was so wasted during a voyage of such long continuance, that they brought little relief to the colony.[x]

Composed by the prudent conduct of Columbus.

By this junction with a band of such bold and desperate associates, Roldan became extremely formidable, and no less extravagant in his demands. Columbus, though filled with resentment at his ingratitude, and highly exasperated by the insolence of his followers, made no haste to take the field. He trembled at the

[x] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 12. Life of Columbus, c. 78, 79.

thoughts of kindling the flames of a civil war, in which, whatever party prevailed, the power and strength of both must be so much wasted, as might encourage the common enemy to unite and complete their destruction. At the same time, he observed, that the prejudices and passions which incited the rebels to take arms, had so far infected those who still adhered to him, that many of them were adverse, and all cold to the service. From such sentiments, with respect to the public interest, as well as from this view of his own situation, he chose to negotiate rather than to fight. By a seasonable proclamation, offering free pardon to such as should merit it by returning to their duty, he made impression upon some of the malecontents. By engaging to grant such as should desire it the liberty of returning to Spain, he allured all those unfortunate adventurers, who, from sickness and disappointment were disgusted with the country. By promising to re-establish Roldan in his former office, he soothed his pride; and, by complying with most of his demands in behalf of his followers, he satisfied their avarice. Thus, gradually, and without bloodshed, but after many tedious negotiations, he dissolved this dangerous combination, which threatened the colony with ruin; and restored the appear-

BOOK II.

ance of order, regular government, and tranquillity.[y]

1498.

A new mode of settlement established.

In consequence of this agreement with the mutineers, lands were allotted them in different parts of the island, and the Indians settled in each district were appointed to cultivate a certain portion of ground for the use of those

1499. new masters. The performance of this work was substituted in place of the tribute formerly imposed; and how necessary soever such a regulation might be in a sickly and feeble colony, it introduced among the Spaniards the *Repartimientos*, or distributions of Indians established by them in all their settlements, which brought numberless calamities upon that unhappy people, and subjected them to the most grievous oppression.[z] This was not the only bad effect of the insurrection in Hispaniola; it prevented Columbus from prosecuting his discoveries on the continent, as self-preservation obliged him to keep near his person his brother the adelantado, and the sailors whom he intended to have employed in that service. As soon as his affairs would permit, he sent some of his ships to Spain with a jour-

[y] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 13, 14. Life of Columbus, c. 80, &c.

[z] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 14, &c.

nal of the voyage which he had made, a description of the new countries which he had discovered, a chart of the coast along which he had sailed, and specimens of the gold, the pearls, and other curious or valuable productions which he had acquired by trafficking with the natives. At the same time he transmitted an account of the insurrection in Hispaniola; he accused the mutineers not only of having thrown the colony into such violent convulsions as threatened its dissolution, but of having obstructed every attempt towards discovery and improvement, by their unprovoked rebellion against their superiors, and proposed several regulations for the better government of the island, as well as the extinction of that mutinous spirit, which, though suppressed at present, might soon burst out with additional rage. Roldan and his associates did not neglect to convey to Spain, by the same ships, an apology for their own conduct, together with their recriminations upon the admiral and his brothers. Unfortunately for the honour of Spain, and the happiness of Columbus, the latter gained most credit in the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, and produced unexpected effects.[a]

BOOK II. 1499.

[a] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 14. Benzon. Hist. Nov. Orb. lib. i. c. 2.

BOOK II.

1499. The voyage of Vasco de Gama to the East-Indies, by the Cape of Good Hope.

BUT, previous to the relating of these, it is proper to take a view of some events, which merit attention, both on account of their own importance, and their connection with the history of the New World. While Columbus was engaged in his successive voyages to the west, the spirit of discovery did not languish in Portugal, the kingdom where it first acquired vigour, and became enterprising. Self-condemnation and neglect were not the only sentiments to which the success of Columbus, and reflection upon their own imprudence in rejecting his proposals, gave rise among the Portuguese. They excited a general emulation to surpass his performances, and an ardent desire to make some reparation to their country for their own error. With this view, Emanuel, who inherited the enterprising genius of his predecessors, persisted in their grand scheme of opening a passage to the East-Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, and, soon after his accession to the throne, equipped a squadron for that important voyage. He gave the command of it to Vasco de Gama, a man of noble birth, possessed of virtue, prudence and courage, equal to the station. The squadron, like all those fitted out for discovery in the infancy of navigation, was extremely feeble, consisting only of three vessels, of neither burden nor force adequate to the service. As the Europeans were at

that time little acquainted with the course of the trade-winds and periodical monsoons, which render navigation in the Atlantic ocean, as well as in the sea that separates Africa from India, at some seasons easy, and at others not only dangerous, but almost impracticable, the time chosen for Gama's departure was the most improper during the whole year. He set sail from Lisbon on the ninth of July, and standing towards the south, had to struggle for four months with contrary winds, before he could reach the Cape of Good Hope. Here their violence began to abate; and during an interval of calm weather, Gama doubled that formidable promontory, which had so long been the boundary of navigation, and directed his course towards the north-east, along the African coast. He touched at several ports; and after various adventures, which the Portuguese historians relate with high but just encomiums upon his conduct and intrepidity, he came to anchor before the city of Melinda. Throughout all the vast countries which extend along the coast of Africa, from the river Senegal to the confines of Zanguebar, the Portuguese had found a race of men rude and uncultivated, strangers to letters, to arts, and commerce, and differing from the inhabitants of Europe, no less in their features and complexion than in their manners and institutions.

1499.

1497.

Nov. 20.

BOOK II. 1499.

As they advanced from this, they observed, to their inexpressible joy, that the human form gradually altered and improved; the Asiatic features began to predominate, marks of civilisation appeared, letters were known, the Mahometan religion was established, and a commerce, far from being inconsiderable, was carried on. At that time several vessels from India were in the port of Melinda. Gama now pursued his voyage with almost absolute certainty of success, and, under the conduct of a Mahometan pilot, arrived at Calecut, upon the coast of Malabar, on the twenty-second of May one thousand four hundred and ninety-eight. What he beheld of the wealth, the populousness, the cultivation, the industry, and arts of this highly-civilised country, far surpassed any idea that he had formed, from the imperfect accounts which the Europeans had hitherto received of it. But as he possessed neither sufficient force to attempt a settlement, nor proper commodities with which he could carry on commerce of any consequence, he hastened back to Portugal, with an account of his success in performing a voyage, the longest, as well as most difficult, that had ever been made, since the first invention of navigation. He landed at Lisbon on the fourteenth of September, one thousand four hundred and ninety-nine, two years two

months and five days from the time he left that port. [b]

1499.

THUS, during the course of the fifteenth century, mankind made greater progress in exploring the state of the habitable globe, than in all the ages which had elapsed previous to that period. The spirit of discovery, feeble at first and cautious, moved within a very narrow sphere, and made its efforts with hesitation and timidity. Encouraged by success, it became adventurous, and boldly extended its operations. In the course of its progression, it continued to acquire vigour, and advanced at length with a rapidity and force which burst through all the limits within which ignorance and fear had hitherto circumscribed the activity of the human race. Almost fifty years were employed by the Portuguese in creeping along the coast of Africa from Cape Non to Cape de Verd, the latter of which lies only twelve degrees to the south of the former. In less than thirty years they ventured beyond the equinoctial line into another hemisphere, and penetrated to the southern extremity of Africa, at the distance of forty-nine degrees from Cape de Verd. During the last seven years of the century, a New World was discovered in the west, not inferior in ex-

[b] Romusio, vol. 1. 119. D.

BOOK II. 1499.

tent to all the parts of the earth with which mankind were at that time acquainted. In the east, unknown seas and countries were found out, and a communication, long desired, but hitherto concealed, was opened between Europe and the opulent regions of India. In comparison with events so wonderful and unexpected, all that had hitherto been deemed great or splendid faded away and disappeared. Vast objects now presented themselves. The human mind, roused and interested by the prospect, engaged with ardour in pursuit of them, and exerted its active powers in a new direction.

Discoveries carried on in Spain by private adventurers.

THIS spirit of enterprise, though but newly awakened in Spain, began soon to operate extensively. All the attempts towards discovery made in that kingdom had hitherto been carried on by Columbus alone, and at the expense of the sovereign. But now private adventurers, allured by the magnificent descriptions he gave of the regions which he had visited, as well as by the specimens of their wealth which he produced, offered to fit out squadrons at their own risk, and to go in quest of new countries. The Spanish court, whose scanty revenues were exhausted by the charge of its expeditions to the New World, which, though they opened alluring

prospects of future benefit, yielded a very sparing return of present profit, was extremely willing to devolve the burden of discovery upon its subjects. It seized with joy an opportunity of rendering the avarice, the ingenuity, and efforts of projectors, instrumental in promoting designs of certain advantage to the public, though of doubtful success with respect to themselves. One of the first propositions of this kind was made by Alonso de Ojeda, a gallant and active officer, who had accompanied Columbus in his second voyage. His rank and character procured him such credit with the merchants of Seville, that they undertook to equip four ships, provided he could obtain the royal licence, authorising the voyage. The powerful patronage of the Bishop of Badajos easily secured success in a suit so agreeable to the court. Without consulting Columbus, or regarding the rights and jurisdiction which he had acquired by the capitulation in one thousand four hundred and ninety-two, Ojeda was permitted to set out for the New World. In order to direct his course, the bishop communicated to him the admiral's journal of his last voyage, and his charts of the countries which he had discovered. Ojeda struck out into no new path of navigation, but adhering servilely to the route which Columbus had taken, arrived on the

1499.

Ojeda the first of these.

May.

BOOK II. coast of Paria. He traded with the natives, and standing to the west, proceeded as far as Cape de Vela, and ranged along a considerable extent of coast beyond that on which Columbus had touched. Having thus ascertained the opinion of Columbus, that this country was a part of the continent, Ojeda returned by way of Hispaniola to Spain, with some reputation as a discoverer, but with little benefit to those who had raised the funds for the expedition.[b]

1499. October.

Is accompanied by Amerigo Vespucci.

AMERIGO VESPUCCI, a Florentine gentleman, accompanied Ojeda in this voyage. In what station he served, is uncertain; but as he was an experienced sailor, and eminently skilful in all the sciences subservient to navigation, he seems to have acquired such authority among his companions, that they willingly allowed him to have a chief share in directing their operations during the voyage. Soon after his return, he transmitted an account of his adventures and discoveries to one of his countrymen; and labouring with the vanity of a traveller to magnify his own exploits, he had the address and confidence to frame his narrative, so as to make it appear that he had the glory of having first discovered the continent in the New World. Amerigo's account was

[b] Herrara, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 1, 2, 3.

drawn up not only with art, but with some elegance. It contained an amusing history of his voyage, and judicious observations upon the natural productions, the inhabitants, and the customs of the countries which he had visited. As it was the first description of any part of the New World that was published, a performance so well calculated to gratify the passion of mankind for what is new and marvellous, circulated rapidly, and was read with admiration. The country of which Amerigo was supposed to be the discoverer, came gradually to be called by his name. The caprice of mankind, often as unaccountable as unjust, has perpetuated this error. By the universal consent of nations, AMERICA is the name bestowed on this new quarter of the globe. The bold pretensions of a fortunate impostor have robbed the discoverer of the New World of a distinction which belonged to him. The name of Amerigo has supplanted that of Columbus; and mankind may regret an act of injustice, which, having received the sanction of time, it is now too late to redress.[c]

1499.

From whom the name of America is given to the New World.

DURING the same year, another voyage of discovery was undertaken. Columbus not

Voyage of Alonso Nigno.

[c] See NOTE XXII.

BOOK II. 1499.

only introduced the spirit of naval enterprise into Spain, but all the first adventurers who distinguished themselves in this new career, were formed by his instructions, and acquired in his voyages the skill and information which qualified them to imitate his example. Alonso Nigno, who had served under the admiral in his last expedition, fitted out a single ship, in conjunction with Christopher Guerra, a merchant of Seville, and sailed to the coast of Paria. This voyage seems to have been conducted with greater attention to private emolument, than to any general or national object. Nigno and Guerra made no discoveries of any importance; but they brought home such a return of gold and pearls, as inflamed their countrymen with the desire of engaging in similar adventures.[d]

1500. Jan. 13. Of Vincent Yanez Pinzon.

Soon after, Vincent Yanez Pinzon, one of the admiral's companions in his first voyage, sailed from Palos with four ships. He stood boldly towards the south, and was the first Spaniard who ventured to cross the equinoctial line; but he seems to have landed on no part of the coast beyond the mouth of the Maragnon, or river of the Amazons. All these navigators adopted the erroneous theory of Columbus, and believed

[d] P. Martyr. dec. p. 87. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 5.

that the countries which they had discovered were part of the vast continent of India.[c]

1500.

The Portuguese discover Brasil.

DURING the last year of the fifteenth century, that fertile district of America, on the confines of which Pinzon had stopped short, was more fully discovered. The successful voyage of Gama to the East-Indies having encouraged the King of Portugal to fit out a fleet so powerful, as not only to carry on trade, but to attempt conquest, he gave the command of it to Pedro Alvarez Cabral. In order to avoid the coast of Africa, where he was certain of meeting with variable breezes, or frequent calms, which might retard his voyage, Cabral stood out to sea, and kept so far to the west, that, to his surprise, he found himself upon the shore of an unknown country, in the tenth degree beyond the line. He imagined, at first, that it was some island in the Atlantic ocean, hitherto unobserved; but, proceeding along its coast for several days, he was led gradually to believe, that a country so extensive formed a part of some great continent. This latter opinion was well founded. The country with which he fell in belongs to that province in South America, now known by the name of Brasil. He landed; and having formed a very high idea of the ferti-

[c] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 6. P. Martyr, dec. p. 95.

BOOK II. 1500.

lity of the soil, and agreeableness of the climate, he took possession of it for the crown of Portugal, and dispatched a ship to Lisbon with an account of this event, which appeared to be no less important than it was unexpected.[f] Columbus's discovery of the New World was the effort of an active genius, enlightened by science, guided by experience, and acting upon a regular plan, executed with no less courage than perseverance. But from this adventure of the Portuguese, it appears that chance might have accomplished that great design which it is now the pride of human reason to have formed and perfected. If the sagacity of Columbus had not conducted mankind to America, Cabral, by a fortunate accident, might have led them, a few years later, to the knowledge of that extensive continent.[g]

Machinations against Columbus.

While the Spaniards and Portuguese, by those successive voyages, were daily acquiring more enlarged ideas of the extent and opulence of that quarter of the globe which Columbus had made known to them, he himself, far from enjoying the tranquillity and honours with which his services should have been recompensed, was struggling with every distress in

[f] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 7.
[g] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 5.

which the envy and malevolence of the people under his command, or the ingratitude of the court which he served, could involve him. Though the pacification with Roldan broke the union and weakened the force of the mutineers, it did not extirpate the seeds of discord out of the island. Several of the malecontents continued in arms, refusing to submit to the admiral. He and his brothers were obliged to take the field alternately, in order to check their incursions, or to punish their crimes. The perpetual occupation and disquiet which this created, prevented him from giving due attention to the dangerous machinations of his enemies in the court of Spain. A good number of such as were most dissatisfied with his administration, had embraced the opportunity of returning to Europe with the ships which he dispatched from St. Domingo. The final disappointment of all their hopes inflamed the rage of these unfortunate adventurers against Columbus to the utmost pitch. Their poverty and distress, by exciting compassion, rendered their accusations credible, and their complaints interesting. They teased Ferdinand and Isabella incessantly with memorials, containing the detail of their own grievances, and the articles of their charge against Columbus. Whenever either the King or Queen appeared

BOOK II. 1500.

in public, they surrounded them in a tumultuary manner, insisting with importunate clamours for the payment of the arrears due to them, and demanding vengeance upon the author of their sufferings. They insulted the admiral's sons wherever they met them, reproaching them as the offspring of the projector, whose fatal curiosity had discovered those pernicious regions which drained Spain of its wealth, and would prove the grave of its people. These avowed endeavours of the malecontents from America to ruin Columbus, were seconded by the secret, but more dangerous insinuations of that party among the courtiers, which had always thwarted his schemes, and envied his success and credit.[h]

Their influence on Ferdinand and Isabella.

FERDINAND was disposed to listen, not only with a willing, but with a partial ear to these accusations. Notwithstanding the flattering accounts which Columbus had given of the riches of America, the remittances from it had hitherto been so scanty, that they fell far short of defraying the expence of the armaments fitted out. The glory of the discovery, together with the prospect of remote commercial advantages, was all that Spain had yet received in return for the

[h] Life of Columbus, c. 85.

efforts which she had made. But time had already diminished the first sensations of joy which the discovery of a New World occasioned, and fame alone was not an object to satisfy the cold interested mind of Ferdinand. The nature of commerce was then so little understood, that where immediate gain was not acquired, the hope of distant benefit, or of slow and moderate returns, was totally disregarded. Ferdinand considered Spain, on this account, as having lost by the enterprise of Columbus, and imputed it to his misconduct and incapacity for government, that a country abounding in gold had yielded nothing of value to its conquerors. Even Isabella, who from the favourable opinion which she entertained of Columbus, had uniformly protected him, was shaken at length by the number and boldness of his accusers, and began to suspect that a disaffection so general must have been occasioned by real grievances, which called for redress. The Bishop of Badajos, with his usual animosity against Columbus, encouraged these suspicions and confirmed them.

1500.

As soon as the Queen began to give way to the torrent of calumny, a resolution fatal to Columbus was taken. Francis de Bovadilla, a knight of Calatrava, was appointed to repair to

Fatal effects of this.

BOOK II. 1500.

Hispaniola, with full powers to inquire into the conduct of Columbus, and, if he should find the charge of mal-administration proved, to supersede him, and assume the government of the island. It was impossible to escape condemnation, when this preposterous commission made it the interest of the judge to pronounce the person whom he was sent to try, guilty. Though Columbus had now composed all the dissensions in the island; though he had brought both Spaniards and Indians to submit peaceably to his government; though he had made such effectual provision for working the mines, and cultivating the country, as would have secured a considerable revenue to the King, as well as large profits to individuals, Bovadilla, without deigning to attend to the nature or merit of those services, discovered from the moment that he landed in Hispaniola, a determined purpose of treating him as a criminal. He took possession of the admiral's house in St. Domingo, from which its master happened at that time to be absent, and seized his effects, as if his guilt had been already fully proved; he rendered himself master of the fort and of the King's stores by violence; he required all persons to acknowledge him as supreme governor; he set at liberty the prisoners confined by the admiral, and summoned him to appear before his tribunal, in

order to answer for his conduct; transmitting to him, together with the summons, a copy of the royal mandate, by which Columbus was enjoined to yield implicit obedience to his commands. 1500.

Columbus sent in chains to Spain. October.

COLUMBUS, though deeply affected with the ingratitude and injustice of Ferdinand and Isabella, did not hesitate a moment about his own conduct. He submitted to the will of his sovereigns with a respectful silence, and repaired directly to the court of that violent and partial judge whom they had authorised to try him. Bovadilla, without admitting him into his presence, ordered him instantly to be arrested, to be loaded with chains, and hurried on board a ship. Even under this humiliating reverse of fortune, the firmness of mind which distinguishes the character of Columbus did not forsake him. Conscious of his own integrity, and solacing himself with reflecting upon the great things which he had achieved, he endured this insult offered to his character, not only with composure, but with dignity. Nor had he the consolation of sympathy to mitigate his sufferings. Bovadilla had already rendered himself so extremely popular, by granting various immunities to the colony, by liberal donations of Indians to all who applied for them, and by relaxing the reins of discipline and

BOOK II. 1500.

government, that the Spaniards, who were mostly adventurers, whom their indigence or crimes had compelled to abandon their native country, expressed the most indecent satisfaction with the disgrace and imprisonment of Columbus. They flattered themselves, that now they should enjoy an uncontrolled liberty more suitable to their disposition and former habits of life. Among persons thus prepared to censure the proceedings, and to asperse the character of Columbus, Bovadilla collected materials for a charge against him. All accusations, the most improbable, as well as inconsistent, were received. No informer, however infamous, was rejected. The result of this inquest, no less indecent than partial, he transmitted to Spain. At the same time, he ordered Columbus, with his two brothers, to be carried thither in fetters; and, adding cruelty to insult, he confined them in different ships, and excluded them from the comfort of that friendly intercourse which might have soothed their common distress. But while the Spaniards in Hispaniola viewed the arbitrary and insolent proceedings of Bovadilla with a general approbation, which reflects dishonour upon their name and country, one man still retained a proper sense of the great actions which Columbus had performed, and was touched with the sentiments of veneration

and pity due to his rank, his age, and his merit. Alonzo de Valejo, the captain of the vessel on board which the admiral was confined, as soon as he was clear of the island, approached his prisoner with great respect, and offered to release him from the fetters with which he was unjustly loaded. "No," replied Columbus, with a generous indignation, "I wear these irons in consequence of an order from my sovereigns. They shall find me as obedient to this as to their other injunctions. By their command I have been confined, and their command alone shall set me at liberty."[1] 1500.

FORTUNATELY, the voyage to Spain was extremely short. As soon as Ferdinand and Isabella were informed that Columbus was brought home a prisoner, and in chains, they perceived at once what universal astonishment this event must occasion, and what an impression to their disadvantage it must make. All Europe, they foresaw, would be filled with indignation at this ungenerous requital of a man who had performed actions worthy of the highest recompense, and would exclaim against the injustice of the nation, to which he had been such an eminent benefactor, as well as against the in- Nov. 23. Set at liberty, but deprived of all authority.

[1] Life of Columbus, c. 86. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 8—11. Gomara Hist. c. 23. Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6.

BOOK II. gratitude of the princes whose reign he had rendered illustrious. Ashamed of their own conduct, and eager not only to make some reparation for this injury, but to efface the stain which it might fix upon their character, they instantly issued orders to set Columbus at liberty, invited him to court, and remitted money to enable him to appear there in a manner suitable to his rank. When he entered the royal presence, Columbus threw himself at the feet of his sovereigns. He remained for some time silent; the various passions which agitated his mind suppressing his power of utterance. At length he recovered himself, and vindicated his conduct in a long discourse, producing the most satisfying proofs of his own integrity as well as good intention, and evidence, no less clear, of the malevolence of his enemies, who, not satisfied with having ruined his fortune, laboured to deprive him of what alone was now left, his honour and his fame. Ferdinand received him with decent civility, and Isabella with tenderness and respect. They both expressed their sorrow for what had happened, disavowed their knowledge of it, and joined in promising him protection and future favour. But though they instantly degraded Bovadilla, in order to remove from themselves any suspicion of having authorised his violent proceedings, they did

1500.

Dec. 17.

not restore to Columbus his jurisdiction and privileges as viceroy of those countries which he had discovered. Though willing to appear the avengers of Columbus's wrongs, that illiberal jealousy which prompted them to invest Bovadilla with such authority as put it in his power to treat the admiral with indignity still subsisted. They were afraid to trust a man to whom they had been so highly indebted, and retaining him at court under various pretexts, they appointed Nicholas de Ovando, a knight of the military order of Alcantara, governor of Hispaniola.[k]

1500.

Columbus was deeply affected with this new injury, which came from hands that seemed to be employed in making reparation for his past sufferings. The sensibility with which great minds feel every thing that implies any suspicion of their integrity, or that wears the aspect of an affront, is exquisite. Columbus had experienced both from the Spaniards; and their ungenerous conduct exasperated him to such a degree, that he could no longer conceal the sentiments which it excited. Wherever he went he carried about with him, as a memorial of their ingratitude, those fetters

[k] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 10—12. Life of Columbus, c. 87.

BOOK II. 1500. with which he had been loaded. They were constantly hung up in his chamber, and he gave orders, that when he died they should be buried in his grave.[1]

1501. Progress of discovery. MEANWHILE, the spirit of discovery, notwithstanding the severe check which it had received by the ungenerous treatment of the man who first excited it in Spain, continued January. active and vigorous. Roderigo de Bastidas, a person of distinction, fitted out two ships in copartnery with John de la Cosa, who having served under the admiral in two of his voyages was deemed the most skilful pilot in Spain. They steered directly towards the continent, arrived on the coast of Paria, and proceeding to the west, discovered all the coast of the province now known by the name of Tierra Firme, from Cape de Vela to the gulf of Darien. Not long after, Ojeda, with his former associate Amerigo Vespucci, set out upon a second voyage, and being unacquainted with the destination of Bastidas, held the same course, and touched at the same places. The voyage of Bastidas was prosperous and lucrative, that of Ojeda unfortunate. But both tended to increase the ardour of discovery; for in proportion as the Spaniards acquired a more extensive knowledge of the

[1] Life of Columbus, c. 86. p. 577.

American continent, their idea of its opulence and fertility increased.[m]

1501.

Ovando appointed governor of Hispaniola.

BEFORE these adventurers returned from their voyages, a fleet was equipped, at the public expense, for carrying over Ovando, the new governor, to Hispaniola. His presence there was extremely requisite, in order to stop the inconsiderate career of Bovadilla, whose imprudent administration threatened the settlement with ruin. Conscious of the violence and iniquity of his proceedings against Columbus, he continued to make it his sole object to gain the favour and support of his countrymen, by accommodating himself to their passions and prejudices. With this view, he established regulations in every point the reverse of those which Columbus deemed essential to the prosperity of the colony. Instead of the severe discipline, necessary in order to habituate the dissolute and corrupted members of which the society was composed, to the restraints of law and subordination, he suffered them to enjoy such uncontrolled licence, as encouraged the wildest excesses. Instead of protecting the Indians, he gave a legal sanction to the oppression of that unhappy people. He took the exact number of

[m] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 11.

BOOK II.

such as survived their past calamities, divided them into distinct classes, distributed them in property among his adherents, and reduced all the people of the island to a state of complete servitude. As the avarice of the Spaniards was too rapacious and impatient to try any method of acquiring wealth but that of searching for gold, this servitude became as grievous as it was unjust. The Indians were driven in crowds to the mountains, and compelled to work in the mines by masters, who imposed their tasks without mercy or discretion. Labour so disproportioned to their strength and former habits of life, wasted that feeble race of men with such rapid consumption, as must have soon terminated in the utter extinction of the ancient inhabitants of the country.[n]

1501.

New regulations established.

THE necessity of applying a speedy remedy to those disorders, hastened Ovando's departure. He had the command of the most respectable armament hitherto fitted out for the New World. It consisted of thirty-two ships, on board of which two thousand five hundred persons embarked, with an intention of settling in the country. Upon the arrival of the new governor with this powerful reinforcement to

1502.

[n] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 11, &c. Oviedo Hist. lib. iii. c. 6. p. 97. Benzon Hist. lib. i. c. 12. p. 51.

the colony, Bovadilla resigned his charge, and was commanded to return instantly to Spain, in order to answer for his conduct. Roldan, and the other ringleaders of the mutineers, who had been most active in opposing Columbus, were required to leave the island at the same time. A proclamation was issued, declaring the natives to be free subjects of Spain, of whom no service was to be expected contrary to their own inclination, and without paying them an adequate price for their labour. With respect to the Spaniards themselves, various regulations were made, tending to suppress the licentious spirit which had been so fatal to the colony, and to establish that reverence for law and order on which society is founded, and to which it is indebted for its increase and stability. In order to limit the exorbitant gain which private persons were supposed to make by working the mines, an ordinance was published, directing all the gold to be brought to a public smelting-house, and declaring one half of it to be the property of the crown.[o] 1502.

The disagreeable situation of Columbus.

WHILE these steps were taking for securing the tranquillity and welfare of the colony which Columbus had planted, he himself was engaged

[o] Solorzano Politica Indiana, lib. i. c. 12. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 12.

BOOK II. 1502.

in the unpleasant employment of soliciting the favour of an ungrateful court, and notwithstanding all his merit and services, he solicited in vain. He demanded, in terms of the original capitulation in one thousand four hundred and ninety-two, to be reinstated in his office of viceroy over the countries which he had discovered. By a strange fatality, the circumstance which he urged in support of his claim, determined a jealous monarch to reject it. The greatness of his discoveries, and the prospect of their increasing value, made Ferdinand consider the concessions in the capitulation as extravagant and impolitic. He was afraid of intrusting a subject with the exercise of a jurisdiction that now appeared to be so extremely extensive, and might grow to be no less formidable. He inspired Isabella with the same suspicions; and under various pretexts, equally frivolous and unjust, they eluded all Columbus's requisitions to perform that which a solemn compact bound them to accomplish. After attending the court of Spain for near two years, as an humble suitor, he found it impossible to remove Ferdinand's prejudices and apprehensions; and perceived, at length, that he laboured in vain, when he urged a claim of justice or merit with an interested and unfeeling prince.

BOOK II.

1502. He forms new schemes of discovery.

But even this ungenerous return did not discourage him from pursuing the great object which first called forth his inventive genius, and excited him to attempt discovery. To open a new passage to the East-Indies, was his original and favourite scheme. This still engrossed his thoughts; and either from his own observations in his voyage to Paria, or from some obscure hint of the natives, or from the accounts given by Bastidas and de la Cosa, of their expedition, he conceived an opinion that, beyond the continent of America, there was a sea which extended to the East-Indies, and hoped to find some strait or narrow neck of land, by which a communication might be opened with it and the part of the ocean already known. By a very fortunate conjecture, he supposed this strait or isthmus to be situated near the gulf of Darien. Full of this idea, though he was now of an advanced age, worn out with fatigue, and broken with infirmities, he offered, with the alacrity of a youthful adventurer, to undertake a voyage which would ascertain this important point, and perfect the grand scheme which from the beginning he proposed to accomplish. Several circumstances concurred in disposing Ferdinand and Isabella to lend a favourable ear to this proposal. They were glad to have the pretext of any honourable employment for removing

BOOK II. 1502.

from court a man with whose demands they deemed it impolitic to comply, and whose services it was indecent to neglect. Though unwilling to reward Columbus, they were not insensible of his merit, and from their experience of his skill and conduct, had reason to give credit to his conjectures, and to confide in his success. To these considerations, a third must be added of still more powerful influence. About this time the Portuguese fleet, under Cabral, arrived from the Indies; and, by the richness of its cargo, gave the people of Europe a more perfect idea than they had hitherto been able to form, of the opulence and fertility of the East. The Portuguese had been more fortunate in their discoveries than the Spaniards. They had opened a communication with countries where industry, arts, and elegance flourished; and where commerce had been longer established, and carried to greater extent, than in any region of the earth. Their first voyages thither yielded immediate as well as vast returns of profit, in commodities extremely precious and in great request. Lisbon became immediately the seat of commerce and wealth; while Spain had only the expectation of remote benefit, and of future gain, from the western world. Nothing, then, could be more acceptable to the Spaniards than Columbus's offer to conduct them

to the east, by a route which he expected to be shorter, as well as less dangerous, than that which the Portuguese had taken. Even Ferdinand was roused by such a prospect, and warmly approved of the undertaking. BOOK II. 1502.

His fourth voyage.

But interesting as the object of this voyage was to the nation, Columbus could procure only four small barks, the largest of which did not exceed seventy tons in burden, for performing it. Accustomed to brave danger, and to engage in arduous undertakings with inadequate force, he did not hesitate to accept the command of this pitiful squadron. His brother Bartholomew, and his second son Ferdinand, the historian of his actions, accompanied him. He sailed from Cadiz on the ninth of May, and touched, as usual, at the Canary islands; from thence he proposed to have stood directly for the continent; but his largest vessel was so clumsy and unfit for service, as constrained him to bear away for Hispaniola, in hopes of exchanging her for some ship of the fleet that had carried out Ovando. When he arrived at St. Domingo, he found eighteen of these ships ready loaded, and on the point of departing for Spain. Columbus immediately acquainted the governor with the destination of his voyage, and the accident which had obliged him to

June 29.

BOOK II. 1502.

alter his route. He requested permission to enter the harbour, not only that he might negotiate the exchange of his ship, but that he might take shelter during a violent hurricane, of which he discerned the approach from various prognostics, which his experience and sagacity had taught him to observe. On that account, he advised him likewise to put off for some days the departure of the fleet bound for Spain. But Ovando refused his request, and despised his counsel. Under circumstances in which humanity would have afforded refuge to a stranger, Columbus was denied admittance into a country of which he had discovered the existence and acquired the possession. His salutary warning, which merited the greatest attention, was regarded as the dream of a visionary prophet, who arrogantly pretended to predict an event beyond the reach of human foresight. The fleet set sail for Spain. Next night the hurricane came on with dreadful impetuosity. Columbus, aware of the danger, took precautions against it, and saved his little squadron. The fleet destined for Spain met with the fate which the rashness and obstinacy of its commanders deserved. Of eighteen ships two or three only escaped. In this general wreck perished Bovadilla, Roldan, and the greater part of those who had been the most

active in persecuting Columbus, and oppressing the Indians. Together with themselves, all the wealth which they had acquired by their injustice and cruelty was swallowed up. It exceeded in value two hundred thousand *pesos*; an immense sum at that period, and sufficient not only to have screened them from any severe scrutiny into their conduct, but to have secured them a gracious reception in the Spanish court. Among the ships that escaped, one had on board all the effects of Columbus which had been recovered from the ruins of his fortune. Historians, struck with the exact discrimination of characters, as well as the just distribution of rewards and punishments, conspicuous in those events, universally attribute them to an immediate interposition of Divine Providence, in order to avenge the wrongs of an injured man, and to punish the oppressors of an innocent people. Upon the ignorant and superstitious race of men, who were witnesses of this occurrence, it made a different impression. From an opinion which vulgar admiration is apt to entertain with respect to persons who have distinguished themselves by their sagacity and inventions, they believed Columbus to be possessed of supernatural powers, and imagined that he had conjured up this dreadful storm by magical

BOOK II. 1502.

art and incantations, in order to be avenged of his enemies.[p]

July 14. Searches in vain for a passage to the Indian ocean.

COLUMBUS soon left Hispaniola, where he met with such an inhospitable reception, and stood towards the continent. After a tedious and dangerous voyage, he discovered Guanaia, an island not far distant from the coast of Honduras. There he had an interview with some inhabitants of the continent, who arrived in a large canoe. They appeared to be a people more civilised, and who had made greater progress in the knowledge of useful arts, than any whom he had hitherto discovered. In return to the inquiries which the Spaniards made, with their usual eagerness, concerning the places where the Indians got the gold which they wore by way of ornament, they directed them to countries situated to the west, in which gold was found in such profusion, that it was applied to the most common uses. Instead of steering in quest of a country so inviting, which would have conducted him along the coast of Yucatan to the rich empire of Mexico, Columbus was so bent upon his favourite scheme of finding out the strait which he supposed to communicate with the Indian ocean, that he bore away

[p] Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 7. 9. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. v. c. 1, 2. Life of Columbus, c. 88.

to the east towards the gulf of Darien. In this navigation he discovered all the coast of the continent, from Cape Gracias a Dios, to a harbour which, on account of its beauty and security, he called Porto Bello. He searched, in vain, for the imaginary strait, through which he expected to make his way into an unknown sea; and though he went on shore several times, and advanced into the country, he did not penetrate so far as to cross the narrow isthmus which separates the gulf of Mexico from the great southern ocean. He was so much delighted, however, with the fertility of the country, and conceived such an idea of its wealth, from the specimens of gold produced by the natives, that he resolved to leave a small colony upon the river Belen, in the province of Veragua, under the command of his brother, and to return himself to Spain, in order to procure what was requisite for rendering the establishment permanent. But the ungovernable spirit of the people under his command, deprived Columbus of the glory of planting the first colony on the continent of America. Their insolence and rapaciousness provoked the natives to take arms, and as these were a more hardy and warlike race of men than the inhabitants of the islands, they cut off part of the Spaniards and obliged

1502.

1503.

BOOK II. 1503.

the rest to abandon a station which was found to be untenable.[q]

Ship-wrecked on the coast of Jamaica.

THIS repulse, the first that the Spaniards met with from any of the American nations, was not the only misfortune that befel Columbus; it was followed by a succession of all the disasters to which navigation is exposed. Furious hurricanes, with violent storms of thunder and lightning, threatened his leaky vessels with destruction; while his discontented crew, exhausted with fatigue, and destitute of provisions, was unwilling or unable to execute his commands. One of his ships perished; he was obliged to abandon another, as unfit for service; and with the two which remained, he quitted that part of the continent, which in his anguish he named the Coast of Vexation[r], and bore away for Hispaniola. New distresses awaited him in this voyage. He was driven back by a violent tempest from the coast of Cuba, his ships fell foul of one another, and were so much shattered by the shock, that with
June 24. the utmost difficulty they reached Jamaica, where he was obliged to run them aground, to prevent them from sinking. The measure of his

[q] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. v. c. 5, &c. Life of Columbus, c. 89, &c. Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 9.

[r] La Costa de los Contrastes.

calamities seemed now to be full. He was cast ashore upon an island at a considerable distance from the only settlement of the Spaniards in America. His ships were ruined beyond the possibility of being repaired. To convey an account of his situation to Hispaniola, appeared impracticable; and without this it was vain to expect relief. His genius, fertile in resources, and most vigorous in those perilous extremities when feeble minds abandon themselves to despair, discovered the only expedient which afforded any prospect of deliverance. He had recourse to the hospitable kindness of the natives, who, considering the Spaniards as beings of a superior nature, were eager, on every occasion, to minister to their wants. From them he obtained two of their canoes, each formed out of the trunk of a single tree hollowed with fire, and so mis-shapen and aukward as hardly to merit the name of boats. In these, which were fit only for creeping along the coast, or crossing from one side of a bay to another, Mendez, a Spaniard, and Fieschi, a Genoese, two gentlemen particularly attached to Columbus, gallantly offered to set out for Hispaniola, upon a voyage of above thirty leagues.[a] This they accomplished in ten days, after surmounting

1503.

[a] Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 9.

BOOK II. 1503. incredible dangers, and enduring such fatigues that several of the Indians who accompanied them sunk under it, and died. The attention paid to them by the governor of Hispaniola was neither such as their courage merited, nor the distress of the persons from whom they came required. Ovando, from a mean jealousy of Columbus, was afraid of allowing him to set foot in the island under his government. This ungenerous passion hardened his heart against every tender sentiment, which reflection upon the services and misfortunes of that great man, or compassion for his own fellow-citizens involved in the same calamities, must have excited. Mendez and Fieschi spent eight months in soliciting relief for their commander and associates, without any prospect of obtaining it.

His distress and sufferings there.

During this period, various passions agitated the mind of Columbus and his companions in adversity. At first the expectation of speedy deliverance, from the success of Mendez and Fieschi's voyage, cheered the 1504. spirits of the most desponding. After some time the most timorous began to suspect that they had miscarried in their daring attempt. At length, even the most sanguine concluded that they had perished. The ray of hope which had broke in upon them, made their

condition appear now more dismal. Despair, heightened by disappointment, settled in every breast. Their last resource had failed, and nothing remained but the prospect of ending their miserable days among naked savages, far from their country and their friends. The seamen, in a transport of rage, rose in open mutiny, threatened the life of Columbus, whom they reproached as the author of all their calamities, seized ten canoes, which they had purchased from the Indians, and, despising his remonstrances and entreaties, made off with them to a distant part of the island. At the same time the natives murmured at the long residence of the Spaniards in their country. As their industry was not greater than that of their neighbours in Hispaniola, like them they found the burden of supporting so many strangers to be altogether intolerable. They began to bring in provisions with reluctance, they furnished them with a sparing hand, and threatened to withdraw those supplies altogether. Such a resolution must have been quickly fatal to the Spaniards. Their safety depended upon the good-will of the Indians; and unless they could revive the admiration and reverence with which that simple people had at first beheld them, destruction was unavoidable. Though the licentious proceedings of the mutineers had, in a great

BOOK II. 1504.

measure, effaced those impressions which had been so favourable to the Spaniards, the ingenuity of Columbus suggested a happy artifice, that not only restored but heightened the high opinion which the Indians had originally entertained of them. By his skill in astronomy he knew that there was shortly to be a total eclipse of the moon. He assembled all the principal persons of the district around him on the day before it happened, and, after reproaching them for their fickleness in withdrawing their affection and assistance from men whom they had lately revered, he told them, that the Spaniards were servants of the Great Spirit who dwells in heaven, who made and governs the world; that he, offended at their refusing to support men who were the objects of his peculiar favour, was preparing to punish this crime with exemplary severity, and that very night the moon should withhold her light, and appear of a bloody hue, as a sign of the divine wrath, and an emblem of the vengeance ready to fall upon them. To this marvellous prediction some of them listened with the careless indifference peculiar to the people of America; others, with the credulous astonishment natural to barbarians. But when the moon began gradually to be darkened, and at length appeared of a red colour, all were struck with terror. They ran with consternation to their houses,

and returning instantly to Columbus loaded with provisions, threw them at his feet, conjuring him to intercede with the Great Spirit to avert the destruction with which they were threatened. Columbus, seeming to be moved by their entreaties, promised to comply with their desire. The eclipse went off, the moon recovered its splendour, and from that day the Spaniards were not only furnished profusely with provisions, but the natives, with superstitious attention, avoided every thing that could give them offence.[t] 1504.

A cruel addition to them.

DURING those transactions, the mutineers had made repeated attempts to pass over to Hispaniola in the canoes which they had seized. But, from their own misconduct, or the violence of the winds and currents, their efforts were all unsuccessful. Enraged at this disappointment, they marched towards that part of the island where Columbus remained, threatening him with new insults and danger. While they were advancing, an event happened, more cruel and afflicting than any calamity which he dreaded from them. The governor of Hispaniola, whose mind was still filled with some dark suspicions

[t] Life of Columbus, c. 103. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 5, 6. Benzon. Hist. lib. i. c. 14.

BOOK II. 1504.

of Columbus, sent a small bark to Jamaica, not to deliver his distressed countrymen, but to spy out their condition. Lest the sympathy of those whom he employed should afford them relief, contrary to his intention, he gave the command of this vessel to Escobar, an inveterate enemy of Columbus, who, adhering to his instructions with malignant accuracy, cast anchor at some distance from the island, approached the shore in a small boat, observed the wretched plight of the Spaniards, delivered a letter of empty compliments to the admiral, received his answer, and departed. When the Spaniards first descried the vessel standing towards the island, every heart exulted, as if the long-expected hour of their deliverance had at length arrived; but when it disappeared so suddenly, they sunk into the deepest dejection, and all their hopes died away. Columbus alone, though he felt most sensibly this wanton insult which Ovando added to his past neglect, retained such composure of mind, as to be able to cheer his followers. He assured them, that Mendez and Fieschi had reached Hispaniola in safety; that they would speedily procure ships to carry them off; but, as Escobar's vessel could not take them all on board, that he had refused to go with her, because he was determined never to abandon the faithful companions of his dis-

tress. Soothed with the expectation of speedy deliverance, and delighted with his apparent generosity in attending more to their preservation than to his own safety, their spirits revived, and he regained their confidence.[u] BOOK II. 1504.

WITHOUT this confidence he could not have resisted the mutineers, who were now at hand. All his endeavours to reclaim those desperate men had no effect but to increase their frenzy. Their demands became every day more extravagant, and their intentions more violent and bloody. The common safety rendered it necessary to oppose them with open force. Columbus, who had been long afflicted with the gout, could not take the field. His brother, the adelantado, marched against them. May 20. They quickly met. The mutineers rejected with scorn terms of accommodation, which were once more offered them, and rushed on boldly to the attack. They fell not upon an enemy unprepared to receive them. In the first shock, several of their most daring leaders were slain. The adelantado, whose strength was equal to his courage, closed with their captain, wounded, disarmed, and took him

[u] Life of Columbus, c. 104. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 17.

BOOK II. 1504.

prisoner.[x] At sight of this, the rest fled with a dastardly fear suitable to their former insolence. Soon after, they submitted in a body to Columbus, and bound themselves by the most solemn oaths to obey all his commands. Hardly was tranquillity re-established, when the ships appeared, whose arrival Columbus had promised with great address, though he could foresee it with little certainty. With transports of joy, the Spaniards quitted an island in which the unfeeling jealousy of Ovando had suffered them to languish above a year, exposed to misery in all its various forms.

His deliverance and arrival at Hispaniola.

When they arrived at St. Domingo, the governor, with the mean artifice of a vulgar mind, that labours to atone for insolence by servility, fawned on the man whom he envied, and had attempted to ruin. He received Columbus with the most studied respect, lodged him in his own house, and distinguished him with every mark of honour. But amidst those over-acted demonstrations of regard, he could not conceal the hatred and malignity latent in his heart. He set at liberty the captain of

[x] Life of Columbus, c. 107. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 11.

the mutineers, whom Columbus had brought over in chains, to be tried for his crimes; and threatened such as had adhered to the admiral with proceeding to a judicial enquiry into their conduct. Columbus submitted in silence to what he could not redress; but discovered an extreme impatience to quit a country which was under the jurisdiction of a man who had treated him, on every occasion, with inhumanity and injustice. His preparations were soon finished, and he set sail for Spain with two ships. Disasters similar to those which had accompanied him through life continued to pursue him to the end of his career. One of his vessels being disabled, was soon forced back to St. Domingo; the other, shattered by violent storms, sailed seven hundred leagues with jury-masts, and reached with difficulty the port of St. Lucar.[y]

BOOK II. 1504. Sept. 12. December.

THERE he received the account of an event the most fatal that could have befallen him, and which completed his misfortunes. This was the death of his patroness Queen Isabella, in whose justice, humanity, and favour, he confided as his last resource. None now remained to redress his wrongs, or to reward him for his

Death of Isabella. Nov. 9.

[y] Life of Columbus, c. 108. Herrera. dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 12.

BOOK II. services and sufferings, but Ferdinand, who had so long opposed and so often injured him. 1504. To solicit a Prince thus prejudiced against him, was an occupation no less irksome than hopeless. In this, however, was Columbus doomed to employ the close of his days. As soon as his health was in some degree re-established, he repaired to court; and though he was received there with civility barely decent, he plied Ferdinand with petition after petition, demanding the punishment of his oppressors, and the restitution of all the privileges bestowed upon him by the capitulation of one thousand four hundred and ninety-two. Ferdinand amused him with fair words and unmeaning promises. Instead of granting his claims, he proposed expedients in order to elude them, and spun out the affair with such apparent art, as plainly discovered his intention that it should never be terminated. The declining health of Columbus flattered Ferdinand with the hopes of being soon delivered from an importunate suitor, and encouraged him to persevere in this illiberal plan. Nor was he deceived in his expectations. Disgusted with the ingratitude of a monarch whom he had served with such fidelity and success, exhausted with the fatigues and hardships which he had endured, and broken with the infirmities which

these had brought upon him, Columbus ended his life at Valladolid on the twentieth of May one thousand five hundred and six, in the fifty-ninth year of his age. He died with a composure of mind suitable to the magnanimity which distinguished his character, and with sentiments of piety becoming that supreme respect for religion, which he manifested in every occurrence of his life.[z]

1504. Death of Columbus.

[z] Life of Columbus, c. 108. Herrera, dec. i. lib. vi. c. 13, 14, 15.

THE

HISTORY

OF

AMERICA.

BOOK III.

WHILE Columbus was employed in his last voyage, several events worthy of notice happened in Hispaniola. The colony there, the parent and nurse of all the subsequent establishments of Spain in the New World, gradually acquired the form of a regular and prosperous society. The humane solicitude of Isabella to protect the Indians from oppression, and particularly the proclamation by which the Spaniards were prohibited to compel them to work, retarded, it is true, for some time the progress of improvement. The natives, who considered exemption from toil as supreme felicity, scorned every allurement and reward by which they were invited to labour. The Spaniards had not a sufficient

1504. State of the colony in Hispaniola.

BOOK III.

number of hands either to work the mines or to cultivate the soil. Several of the first colo-

1504. nists, who had been accustomed to the service of the Indians, quitted the island, when deprived of those instruments, without which they knew not how to carry on any operation. Many of the new settlers who came over with Ovando, were seized with the distempers peculiar to the climate, and in a short space above a thousand of them died. At the same time, the exacting one half of the product of the mines as the royal share, was found to be a demand so exorbitant, that no adventurers would engage to work them upon such terms. In order to save the colony from ruin, Ovando ventured to relax the rigour of the royal edicts.

1505. He made a new distribution of the Indians among the Spaniards, and compelled them to labour, for a stated time, in digging the mines, or in cultivating the ground; but in order to screen himself from the imputation of having subjected them again to servitude, he enjoined their masters to pay them a certain sum, as the price of their work. He reduced the royal share of the gold found in the mines from the half to the third part, and soon after lowered it to a fifth, at which it long remained. Notwithstanding Isabella's tender concern for the good treatment of the Indians, and Ferdi-

nand's eagerness to improve the royal revenue, Ovando persuaded the court to approve of both these regulations.[a] BOOK III. 1505.

War with the Indians.

BUT the Indians, after enjoying respite from oppression, though during a short interval, now felt the yoke of bondage to be so galling, that they made several attempts to vindicate their own liberty. This the Spaniards considered as rebellion, and took arms in order to reduce them to subjection. When war is carried on between nations whose state of improvement is in any degree similar, the means of defence bear some proportion to those employed in the attack; and in this equal contest such efforts must be made, such talents are displayed, and such passions roused, as exhibit mankind to view in a situation no less striking than interesting. It is one of the noblest functions of history, to observe and to delineate men at a juncture when their minds are most violently agitated, and all their powers and passions are called forth. Hence the operations of war, and the struggles between contending states, have been deemed by historians, ancient as well as modern, a capital and important article in the annals of human actions. But in a contest between naked savages, and

[a] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. v. c. 3.

BOOK III. 1505.

one of the most warlike of the European nations, where science, courage, and discipline on one side, were opposed by ignorance, timidity, and disorder on the other, a particular detail of events would be as unpleasant as uninstructive. If the simplicity and innocence of the Indians had inspired the Spaniards with humanity, had softened the pride of superiority into compassion, and had induced them to improve the inhabitants of the New World, instead of oppressing them, some sudden acts of violence, like the too rigorous chastisements of impatient instructors, might have been related without horror. But, unfortunately, this consciousness of superiority operated in a different manner. The Spaniards were advanced so far beyond the natives of America in improvement of every kind, that they viewed them with contempt. They conceived the Americans to be animals of an inferior nature, who were not entitled to the rights and privileges of men. In peace, they subjected them to servitude. In war, they paid no regard to those laws, which, by a tacit convention between contending nations, regulate hostility, and set some bounds to its rage. They considered them not as men fighting in defence of their liberty, but as slaves, who had revolted against their masters. Their

caziques, when taken, were condemned, like the leaders of banditti, to the most cruel and ignominious punishments; and all their subjects, without regarding the distinction of ranks established among them, were reduced to the same state of abject slavery. With such a spirit and sentiments were hostilities carried on against the cazique of Higuey, a province at the eastern extremity of the island. This war was occasioned by the perfidy of the Spaniards, in violating a treaty which they had made with the natives, and it was terminated by hanging up the cazique, who defended his people with bravery so far superior to that of his countrymen, as entitled him to a better fate.[b] 1505.

The cruel and treacherous conduct of Ovando.

THE conduct of Ovando, in another part of the island, was still more treacherous and cruel. The province anciently named Xaragua, which extends from the fertile plain where Leogane is now situated, to the western extremity of the island, was subject to a female cazique, named Anacoana, highly respected by the natives. She, from that partial fondness with which the women of America were attached to the Europeans, (the cause of which shall be afterwards explained,) had always courted the friendship of the Spaniards, and loaded

[b] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 9, 10.

BOOK III. 1505.

them with benefits. But some of the adherents of Roldan having settled in her country, were so much exasperated at her endeavouring to restrain their excesses, that they accused her of having formed a plan to throw off the the yoke, and to exterminate the Spaniards. Ovando, though he knew well what little credit was due to such profligate men, marched, without further enquiry, towards Xaragua, with three hundred foot and seventy horsemen. To prevent the Indians from taking alarm at this hostile appearance, he gave out that his sole intention was to visit Anacoana, to whom his countrymen had been so much indebted, in the most respectful manner, and to regulate with her the mode of levying the tribute payable to the King of Spain. Anacoana, in order to receive this illustrious guest with due honour, assembled the principal men in her dominions, to the number of three hundred, and advancing at the head of these, accompanied by a great crowd of persons of inferior rank, she welcomed Ovando with songs and dances, according to the mode of the country, and conducted him to the place of her residence. There he was feasted for some days, with all the kindness of simple hospitality, and amused with the games and spectacles usual among the Americans upon occasions of mirth and

festivity. But amidst the security which this inspired, Ovando was meditating the destruction of his unsuspicious entertainer and her subjects; and the mean perfidy with which he executed this scheme, equalled his barbarity in forming it. Under colour of exhibiting to the Indians the parade of an European tournament, he advanced with his troops, in battle array, towards the house in which Anacoana and the chiefs who attended her, were assembled. The infantry took possession of all the avenues which led to the village. The horsemen encompassed the house. These movements were the object of admiration without any mixture of fear, until, upon a signal which had been concerted, the Spaniards suddenly drew their swords, and rushed upon the Indians, defenceless, and astonished at an act of treachery which exceeded the conception of undesigning men. In a moment Anacoana was secured. All her attendants were seized and bound. Fire was set to the house; and without examination or conviction, all these unhappy persons, the most illustrious in their own country, were consumed in the flames. Anacoana was reserved for a more ignominious fate. She was carried in chains to St. Domingo, and, after the formality of a trial before Spanish

1505.

BOOK III. judges, she was condemned upon the evidence of those very men who had betrayed her, to be publicly hanged.[c]

1505.

Reduction of the Indians, and its effects.

OVERAWED and humbled by this atrocious treatment of their princes and nobles, who were objects of their highest reverence, the people in all the provinces of Hispaniola submitted, without farther resistance, to the Spanish yoke. Upon the death of Isabella all the regulations tending to mitigate the rigour of their servitude were forgotten. The small gratuity paid to them as the price of their labour was with-

1506. drawn, and at the same time the tasks imposed upon them were increased. Ovando, without any restraint, distributed Indians among his friends in the island. Ferdinand, to whom the Queen had left by will one half of the revenue arising from the settlements in the New World, conferred grants of a similar nature upon his courtiers, as the least expensive mode of rewarding their services. They farmed out the Indians, of whom they were rendered proprietors, to their countrymen settled in Hispaniola; and that wretched people, being compelled to labour in order to satisfy the rapacity of both, the exac-

[c] Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 12. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 4. Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 12. Relacion de destruyc. de las Indias por Bart. de las Casas. p. 8.

tions of their oppressors no longer knew any bounds. But, barbarous as their policy was, and fatal to the inhabitants of Hispaniola, it produced, for some time, very considerable effects. By calling forth the force of a whole nation, and exerting it in one direction, the working of the mines was carried on with amazing rapidity and success. During several years, the gold brought into the royal smelting-houses in Hispaniola amounted annually to four hundred and sixty thousand pesos, above a hundred thousand pounds sterling; which, if we attend to the great change in the value of money since the beginning of the sixteenth century to the present times, must appear a considerable sum. Vast fortunes were created, of a sudden, by some. Others dissipated in ostentatious profusion, what they acquired with facility. Dazzled by both, new adventurers crowded to America, with the most eager impatience, to share in those treasures which had enriched their countrymen; and, notwithstanding the mortality occasioned by the unhealthiness of the climate, the colony continued to increase.[d] 1506.

Progress of the colony.

OVANDO governed the Spaniards with wisdom and justice not inferior to the rigour with which he treated the Indians. He established

[d] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 18, &c.

BOOK III. 1506.

equal laws; and, by executing them with impartiality, accustomed the people of the colony to reverence them. He founded several new towns in different parts of the island, and allured inhabitants to them, by the concession of various immunities. He endeavoured to turn the attention of the Spaniards to some branch of industry more useful than that of searching for gold in the mines. Some slips of the sugar-cane having been brought from the Canary islands by way of experiment, they were found to thrive with such increase in the rich soil and warm climate to which they were transplanted, that the cultivation of them soon became an object of commerce. Extensive plantations were begun; sugar-works, which the Spaniards called *ingenio's*, from the various machinery employed in them, were erected, and in a few years the manufacture of this commodity was the great occupation of the inhabitants of Hispaniola, and the most considerable source of their wealth.[e]

Political regulation of Ferdinand.

THE prudent endeavours of Ovando, to promote the welfare of the colony, were powerfully seconded by Ferdinand. The large remittances which he received from the New World opened his eyes, at length, with respect to the importance of those discoveries,

[e] Oviedo, lib. iv. c. 8.

which he had hitherto affected to undervalue. Fortune, and his own address, having now extricated him out of those difficulties in which he had been involved by the death of his Queen, and by his disputes with his son-in-law about the government of her dominions[f], he had full leisure to turn his attention to the affairs of America. To his provident sagacity, Spain is indebted for many of those regulations which gradually formed that system of profound but jealous policy, by which she governs her dominions in the New World. He erected a court distinguished by the title of *Casa de Contratacion*, or Board of Trade, composed of persons eminent for rank and abilities, to whom he committed the administration of American affairs. This board assembled regularly in Seville, and was invested with a distinct and extensive jurisdiction. He gave a regular form to ecclesiastical government in America, by nominating archbishops, bishops, deans, together with clergymen of subordinate ranks, to take charge of the Spaniards established there, as well as of the natives who should embrace the Christian faith. But notwithstanding the obsequious devotion of the Spanish court to the Papal See, such was Ferdinand's solicitude to prevent any foreign power from claiming jurisdiction, or acquiring

1506. 1507.

[f] Hist. of the Reign of Charles V, vol. ii. p. 6, &c.

BOOK III. 1507.

influence, in his new dominions, that he reserved to the crown of Spain the sole right of patronage to the benefices in America, and stipulated that no papal bull or mandate should be promulgated there, until it was previously examined and approved of by his council. With the same spirit of jealousy, he prohibited any goods to be exported to America, or any person to settle there, without a special licence from that council.[g]

The number of the Indians diminishes fast.

But, notwithstanding this attention to the police and welfare of the colony, a calamity impended which threatened its dissolution. The original inhabitants, on whose labour the Spaniards in Hispaniola depended for their prosperity, and even their existence, wasted so fast, that the extinction of the whole race seemed to be inevitable. When Columbus discovered Hispaniola, the number of its inhabitants was computed to be at least a million.[h] They were now reduced to sixty thousand in the space of fifteen years. This consumption of the human species, no less amazing than rapid, was the effect of several concurring causes. The natives of the American islands were of a more feeble constitution than the inhabitants of the other hemisphere.

[g] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 19, 20.
[h] Ibid. dec. 1. lib. x. c. 12.

They could neither perform the same work, nor endure the same fatigue, with men whose organs were of a more vigorous conformation. The listless indolence in which they delighted to pass their days, as it was the effect of their debility, contributed likewise to increase it, and rendered them, from habit as well as constitution, incapable of hard labour. The food on which they subsisted afforded little nourishment, and they were accustomed to take it in small quantities, not sufficient to invigorate a languid frame, and render it equal to the efforts of active industry. The Spaniards, without attending to those peculiarities in the constitution of the Americans, imposed tasks upon them, which, though not greater than Europeans might have performed with ease, were so disproportioned to their strength, that many sunk under the fatigue, and ended their wretched days. Others, prompted by impatience and despair, cut short their own lives with a violent hand. Famine, brought on by compelling such numbers to abandon the culture of their lands, in order to labour in the mines, proved fatal to many. Diseases of various kinds, some occasioned by the hardships to which they were exposed, and others by their intercourse with the Europeans, who communicated to them some of their peculiar maladies, completed the desolation of the

BOOK III.

island. The Spaniards, being thus deprived of the instruments which they were accustomed to employ, found it impossible to extend their improvements, or even to carry on the works which they had already begun. In order to provide an immediate remedy for an evil so alarming, Ovando proposed to transport the inhabitants of the Lucayo islands to Hispaniola, under pretence that they might be civilised with more facility, and instructed to greater advantage in the Christian religion, if they were united to the Spanish colony, and placed under the immediate inspection of the missionaries settled there. Ferdinand, deceived by this artifice, or willing to connive at an act of violence which policy represented as necessary, gave his assent to the proposal. Several vessels were fitted out for the Lucayos, the commanders of which informed the natives, with whose language they were now well acquainted, that they came from a delicious country, in which the departed ancestors of the Indians resided, by whom they were sent to invite their descendants to resort thither, to partake of the bliss enjoyed there by happy spirits. That simple people listened with wonder and credulity; and fond of visiting their relations and friends in that happy region, followed the Spaniards with eagerness. By this artifice, above forty thousand were de-

1507. 1508.

coyed into Hispaniola, to share in the sufferings which were the lot of the inhabitants of that island, and to mingle their groans and tears with those of that wretched race of men.[1] BOOK III. 1508.

THE Spaniards had, for some time, carried on their operations in the mines of Hispaniola with such ardour as well as success, that these seemed to have engrossed their whole attention. The spirit of discovery languished; and, since the last voyage of Columbus, no enterprise of any moment had been undertaken. But as the decrease of the Indians rendered it impossible to acquire wealth in that island with the same rapidity as formerly, this urged some of the more adventurous Spaniards to search for new countries, where their avarice might be gratified with more facility. Juan Ponce de Leon, who commanded under Ovando in the eastern district of Hispaniola, passed over to the island of St. Juan de Puerto Rico, which Columbus had discovered in his second voyage, and penetrated into the interior part of the country. As he found the soil to be fertile, and expected, from some symptoms, as well as from the information of the inhabitants, to discover mines of gold in New discoveries and settlements.

[1] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 3. Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6. Gomara Hist. c. 41.

BOOK III. 1508.

the mountains, Ovando permitted him to attempt making a settlement in the island. This was easily effected by an officer eminent for conduct no less than for courage. In a few years Puerto Rico was subjected to the Spanish government, the natives were reduced to servitude; and, being treated with the same inconsiderate rigour as their neighbours in Hispaniola, the race of original inhabitants, worn out with fatigue and sufferings, was soon exterminated.[k]

About the same time, Juan Diaz de Solis, in conjunction with Vincent Yanez Pinzon, one of Columbus's original companions, made a voyage to the continent. They held the same course which Columbus had taken, as far as to the island of Guanaios; but, standing from thence to the west, they discovered a new and extensive province, afterwards known by the name of Yucatan, and proceeded a considerable way along the coast of that country.[l] Though nothing memorable occurred in this voyage, it deserves notice, because it led to discoveries of greater importance. For the same reason, the voyage of Sebastian de Ocampo must be mentioned.

[k] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 1—4. Gomara Hist. c. 44. Relacion de B. de las Casas, p. 10.

[l] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 17.

By the command of Ovando, he sailed round Cuba, and first discovered with certainty, that this country, which Columbus once supposed to be a part of the continent was a large island.[m] 1508.

Diego Columbus appointed governor of Hispaniola.

THIS voyage round Cuba was one of the last occurrences under the administration of Ovando. Ever since the death of Columbus, his son Don Diego had been employed in soliciting Ferdinand to grant him the offices of viceroy and admiral in the New World, together with all the other immunities and profits which descended to him by inheritance, in consequence of the original capitulation with his father. But if these dignities and revenues appeared so considerable to Ferdinand, that, at the expense of being deemed unjust as well as ungrateful, he had wrested them from Columbus, it is not surprising that he should be unwilling to confer them on his son. Accordingly, Don Diego wasted two years in incessant but fruitless importunity. Weary of this, he endeavoured at length to obtain, by a legal sentence, what he could not procure from the favour of an interested monarch. He commenced a suit against Ferdinand before the council which managed Indian affairs, and

[m] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 1.

BOOK III.

that court, with integrity which reflects honour upon its proceedings, decided against the
1508. King, and sustained Don Diego's claim of the viceroyalty, together with all the other privileges stipulated in the capitulation. Even after this decree, Ferdinand's repugnance to put a subject in possession of such extensive rights, might have thrown in new obstacles, if Don Diego had not taken a step which interested very powerful persons in the success of his claims. The sentence of the council of the Indies gave him a title to a rank so elevated, and a fortune so opulent, that he found no difficulty in concluding a marriage with Donna Maria, daughter of Don Ferdinand de Toledo, great commendator of Leon, and brother of the Duke of Alva, a nobleman of the first rank, and nearly related to the King. The Duke and his family espoused so warmly the cause of their new ally, that Ferdinand
1509. could not resist their solicitations. He recalled Ovando, and appointed Don Diego his successor, though, even in conferring this favour, he could not conceal his jealousy; for he allowed him to assume only the title of governor, not that of viceroy, which had been adjudged to belong to him.[n]

[n] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 4, &c.

1509. He repairs to Hispaniola.

Don Diego quickly repaired to Hispaniola, attended by his brother, his uncles, his wife, whom the courtesy of the Spaniards honoured with the title of vice-queen, and a numerous retinue of persons of both sexes, born of good families. He lived with a splendour and magnificence hitherto unknown in the New World; and the family of Columbus seemed now to enjoy the honours and rewards due to his inventive genius, of which he himself had been cruelly defrauded. The colony itself acquired new lustre by the accession of so many inhabitants, of a different rank and character from most of those who had hitherto migrated to America, and many of the most illustrious families in the Spanish settlements are descended from the persons who at that time accompanied Don Diego Columbus.°

No benefits accrued to the unhappy natives from this change of governors. Don Diego was not only authorised by a royal edict to continue the *repartimientos*, or distribution of Indians, but the particular number which he might grant to every person, according to his rank in the colony, was specified. He availed himself of that permission, and soon after he landed at St. Domingo, he divided such In-

° Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 1.

BOOK III. 1509.

dians as were still unappropriated, among his relations and attendants.[p]

Pearl fishery of Cubagua.

THE next care of the new governor was to comply with an instruction which he received from the King, about settling a colony in Cubagua, a small island which Columbus had discovered in his third voyage. Though this barren spot hardly yielded subsistence to its wretched inhabitants, such quantities of those oysters which produce pearls were found on its coast, that it did not long escape the inquisitive avarice of the Spaniards, and became a place of considerable resort. Large fortunes were acquired by the fishery of pearls, which was carried on with extraordinary ardour. The Indians, especially those from the Lucayo islands, were compelled to dive for them; and this dangerous and unhealthy employment was an additional calamity, which contributed not a little to the extinction of that devoted race.[q]

New voyages.

ABOUT this period, Juan Diaz de Solis and Pinzon set out, in conjunction, upon a second voyage. They stood directly south, towards

[p] Recopilacion de Leyes, lib. vi. tit. 8. l. 1, 2. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 10.

[q] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 9. Gomara Hist. c. 78.

the equinoctial line, which Pinzon had formerly crossed, and advanced as far as the fortieth degree of southern latitude. They were astonished to find that the continent of America stretched on their right hand, through all this vast extent of ocean. They landed in different places, to take possession in name of their sovereign; but though the country appeared to be extremely fertile and inviting, their force was so small, having been fitted out rather for discovery than making settlements, that they left no colony behind them. Their voyage served, however, to give the Spaniards more exalted and adequate ideas with respect to the dimensions of this new quarter of the globe.[r] 1509.

A settlement on the continent attempted.

THOUGH it was about ten years since Columbus had discovered the main land of America, the Spaniards had hitherto made no settlement in any part of it. What had been so long neglected was now seriously attempted, and with considerable vigour; though the plan for this purpose was neither formed by the crown, nor executed at the expense of the nation, but carried on by the enterprising spirit of private adventurers. This scheme took its rise from Alonso de Ojeda, who had al-

[r] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 9.

BOOK III. 1509.

ready made two voyages as a discoverer, by which he acquired considerable reputation, but no wealth. But his character for intrepidity and conduct easily procured him associates, who advanced the money requisite to defray the charges of the expedition. About the same time, Diego de Nicuessa, who had acquired a large fortune in Hispaniola, formed a similar design. Ferdinand encouraged both; and though he refused to advance the smallest sum, was extremely liberal of titles and patents. He erected two governments on the continent, one extending from Cape de Vela to the gulf of Darien, and the other from that to Cape Gracias a Dios. The former was given to Ojeda, the latter to Nicuessa. Ojeda fitted out a ship and two brigantines, with three hundred men; Nicuessa, six vessels, with seven hundred and eighty men. They sailed about the same time from St. Domingo for their respective governments. In order to give their title to those countries some appearance of validity, several of the most eminent divines and lawyers in Spain were employed to prescribe the mode in which they should take possession of them.[1] There is not in the history of mankind any thing more singular or extravagant than the form which

[1] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 15.

they devised for this purpose. They instructed those invaders, as soon as they landed on the continent, to declare to the natives the principal articles of the Christian faith; to acquaint them, in particular, with the supreme jurisdiction of the Pope over all the kingdoms of the earth; to inform them of the grant which this holy pontiff had made of their country to the King of Spain; to require them to embrace the doctrines of that religion which the Spaniards made known to them; and to submit to the sovereign whose authority they proclaimed. If the natives refused to comply with this requisition, the terms of which must have been utterly incomprehensible to uninstructed Indians, then Ojeda and Nicuessa were authorised to attack them with fire and sword; to reduce them, their wives and children, to a state of servitude; and to compel them by force to recognise the jurisdiction of the church, and the authority of the monarch, to which they would not voluntarily subject themselves.[t] 1509.

The disasters attending it.

As the inhabitants of the continent could not at once yield assent to doctrines too refined for their uncultivated understandings, and explained to them by interpreters imper-

[t] See NOTE XXIII.

BOOK III. 1509.

fectly acquainted with their language; as they did not conceive how a foreign priest, of whom they had never heard, could have any right to dispose of their country, or how an unknown prince should claim jurisdiction over them as his subjects; they fiercely opposed the new invaders of their territories. Ojeda and Nicuessa endeavoured to effect by force what they could not accomplish by persuasion. The contemporary writers enter into a very minute detail in relating their transactions; but as they made no discovery of importance, nor established any permanent settlement, their adventures are not entitled to any considerable place in the general history of a period, where romantic valour, struggling with incredible hardships, distinguish every effort of the Spanish arms. They found the natives in those countries of which they went to assume the government, to be of a character very different from that of their countrymen in the islands. They were free and warlike. Their arrows were dipped in a poison so noxious, that every wound was followed with certain death. In one encounter they slew above seventy of Ojeda's followers, and the Spaniards, for the first time, were taught to dread the inhabitants of the New World. Nicuessa was opposed by people equally resolute in defence of their possessions. Nothing could

soften their ferocity. Though the Spaniards employed every art to soothe them, and to gain their confidence, they refused to hold any intercourse, or to exchange any friendly office, with men whose residence among them they considered as fatal to their liberty and independence. This implacable enmity of the natives, though it rendered an attempt to establish a settlement in their country extremely difficult as well as dangerous, might have been surmounted at length by the perseverance of the Spaniards, by the superiority of their arms, and their skill in the art of war. But every disaster which can be accumulated upon the unfortunate, combined to complete their ruin. The loss of their ships by various accidents upon an unknown coast, the diseases peculiar to a climate the most noxious in all America, the want of provisions, unavoidable in a country imperfectly cultivated, dissension among themselves, and the incessant hostilities of the natives, involved them in a succession of calamities, the bare recital of which strikes one with horror. Though they received two considerable reinforcements from Hispaniola, the greater part of those who had engaged in this unhappy expedition perished, in less than a year, in the most extreme misery. A few who survived, settled as a feeble colony at Santa Maria el Antigua, on the gulf of Darien, under

BOOK III. 1509. 1510.

BOOK III. 1510. that island having almost extirpated the race, many of the Spanish planters, as I have already observed, finding it impossible to carry on their works with the same vigour and profit, were obliged to look out for settlements in some country where people were not yet wasted by oppression. Others, with the inconsiderate levity natural to men upon whom wealth pours in with a sudden flow, had squandered in thoughtless prodigality, what they acquired with ease, and were driven by necessity to embark in the most desperate schemes, in order to retrieve their affairs.

1511. From all these causes, when Don Diego Columbus proposed to conquer the island of Cuba, and to establish a colony there, many persons of chief distinction in Hispaniola engaged with alacrity in the measure. He gave the command of the troops destined for that service to Diego Velasquez, one of his father's companions in his second voyage, and who, having been long settled in Hispaniola, had acquired an ample fortune, with such reputation for probity and prudence, that he seemed to be well qualified for conducting an expedition of importance. Three hundred men were deemed sufficient for the conquest of an island of above seven hundred miles in length, and filled with inhabitants. But they were of the same unwar-

like character with the people of Hispaniola. They were not only intimidated by the appearance of their new enemies, but unprepared to resist them. For though, from the time that the Spaniards took possession of the adjacent island, there was reason to expect a descent on their territories, none of the small communities into which Cuba was divided, had either made any provision for its own defence, or had formed any concert for their common safety. The only obstruction the Spaniards met with was from Hatuey, a cazique, who had fled from Hispaniola, and had taken possession of the eastern extremity of Cuba. He stood upon the defensive at their first landing, and endeavoured to drive them back to their ships. His feeble troops, however, were soon broken and dispersed; and he himself being taken prisoner, Velasquez, according to the barbarous maxim of the Spaniards, considered him as a slave who had taken arms against his master, and condemned him to the flames. When Hatuey was fastened to the stake, a Franciscan friar labouring to convert him, promised him immediate admittance into the joys of heaven, if he would embrace the Christian faith. "Are there any Spaniards," says he, after some pause, "in that region of bliss which you describe?"—"Yes," replied the monk, "but

BOOK III. 1511.

only such as are worthy and good."—"The best of them," returned the indignant cazique, "have neither worth nor goodness: I will not go to a place where I may meet with one of that accursed race."[x] This dreadful example of vengeance struck the people of Cuba with such terror, that they scarcely gave any opposition to the progress of their invaders; and Velasquez, without the loss of a man, annexed this extensive and fertile island to the Spanish monarchy.[y]

Discovery of Florida.

THE facility with which this important conquest was completed, served as an incitement to other undertakings. Juan Ponce de Leon, having acquired both fame and wealth by the reduction of Puerto Rico, was impatient to 1512. engage in some new enterprise. He fitted out three ships at his own expense, for a voyage of discovery, and his reputation soon drew together a respectable body of followers. He directed his course towards the Lucayo islands; and after touching at several of them, as well as of the Bahama isles, he stood to the south-west, and discovered a country hitherto unknown to the Spaniards, which he called

[x] B. de las Casas, p. 40.

[y] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 2, 3, &c. Oviedo, lib. xvii. c. 3. p. 179.

Florida, either because he fell in with it on Palm Sunday, or on account of its gay and beautiful appearance. He attempted to land in different places, but met with such vigorous opposition from the natives, who were fierce and warlike, as convinced him that an increase of force was requisite to effect a settlement. Satisfied with having opened a communication with a new country, of whose value and importance he conceived very sanguine hopes, he returned to Puerto Rico, through the channel now known by the name of the Gulf of Florida.

It was not merely the passion of searching for new countries that prompted Ponce de Leon to undertake this voyage; he was influenced by one of those visionary ideas, which at that time often mingled with the spirit of discovery, and rendered it more active. A tradition prevailed among the natives of Puerto Rico, that in the isle of Bimini, one of the Lucayos, there was a fountain of such wonderful virtue as to renew the youth, and recal the vigour of every person who bathed in its salutary waters. In hopes of finding this grand restorative, Ponce de Leon and his followers ranged through the islands, searching with fruitless solicitude and labour, for the

BOOK III. 1512.

fountain which was the chief object of their expedition. That a tale so fabulous should gain credit among simple uninstructed Indians is not surprising. That it should make any impression upon an enlightened people appears, in the present age, altogether incredible. The fact, however, is certain; and the most authentic Spanish historians mention this extravagant sally of their credulous countrymen. The Spaniards, at that period, were engaged in a career of activity which gave a romantic turn to their imagination, and daily presented to them strange and marvellous objects. A New World was opened to their view. They visited islands and continents, of whose existence mankind in former ages had no conception. In those delightful countries nature seemed to assume another form: every tree and plant and animal was different from those of the ancient hemisphere. They seemed to be transported into enchanted ground; and after the wonders which they had seen, nothing, in the warmth and novelty of their admiration, appeared to them so extraordinary as to be beyond belief. If the rapid succession of new and striking scenes made such impression even upon the sound understanding of Columbus, that he boasted of having found the seat of Paradise, it will not appear

strange that Ponce de Leon should dream of discovering the fountain of youth.[z]

1512.

Progress of Balboa in Darien.

Soon after the expedition to Florida, a discovery of much greater importance was made in another part of America. Balboa having been raised to the government of the small colony at Santa Maria in Darien, by the voluntary suffrage of his associates, was so extremely desirous to obtain from the crown a confirmation of their election, that he dispatched one of his officers to Spain, in order to solicit a royal commission, which might invest him with a legal title to the supreme command. Conscious, however, that he could not expect success from the patronage of Ferdinand's ministers, with whom he was unconnected, or from negotiating in a court to the arts of which he was a stranger, he endeavoured to merit the dignity to which he aspired, and aimed at performing some signal service that would secure him the preference to every competitor. Full of this idea he made frequent inroads into the adjacent country, subdued several of the caziques, and

[z] P. Martyr, decad. p. 202. Ensayo Chronol. para la Hist. de la Florida, par. D. Gab. Cardenas, p. 1. Oviedo, lib. xvi. c. 11. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 5. Hist. de la Conq. de la Florida, par Garc. de la Vega, lib. i. c. 3.

BOOK III. 1512.

collected a considerable quantity of gold, which abounded more in that part of the continent than in the islands. In one of those excursions, the Spaniards contended with such eagerness about the division of some gold, that they were at the point of proceeding to acts of violence against one another. A young cazique who was present, astonished at the high value which they set upon a thing of which he did not discern the use, tumbled the gold out of the balance with indignation; and, turning to the Spaniards, "Why do you quarrel (says he) about such a trifle? If you are so passionately fond of gold, as to abandon your own country, and to disturb the tranquillity of distant nations for its sake, I will conduct you to a region where the metal which seems to be the chief object of your admiration and desire is so common that the meanest utensils are formed of it." Transported with what they heard, Balboa and his companions enquired eagerly where this happy country lay, and how they might arrive at it. He informed them that at the distance of six suns, that is, of six days' journey, towards the south, they should discover another ocean, near to which this wealthy kingdom was situated; but if they intended to attack that powerful state, they must assemble forces far superior

in number and strength to those with which they now appeared.[a]

1512.

The schemes which he forms.

THIS was the first information which the Spaniards received concerning the great southern ocean, or the opulent and extensive country known afterwards by the name of Peru. Balboa had now before him objects suited to his boundless ambition, and the enterprising ardour of his genius. He immediately concluded the ocean which the cazique mentioned, to be that for which Columbus had searched without success in this part of America, in hopes of opening a more direct communication with the East-Indies; and he conjectured that the rich territory which had been described to him must be part of that vast and opulent region of the earth. Elated with the idea of performing what so great a man had attempted in vain, and eager to accomplish a discovery which he knew would be no less acceptable to the King than beneficial to his country, he was impatient until he could set out upon this enterprise, in comparison of which all his former exploits appeared inconsiderable. But previous arrangement and preparation were requisite to insure success. He began with courting and securing the friend-

[a] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 2. Gomara, c. 60. P. Martyr, dec. p. 149.

BOOK III. 1512.

ship of the neighbouring caziques. He sent some of his officers to Hispaniola with a large quantity of gold, as a proof of his past success, and an earnest of his future hopes. By a proper distribution of this, they secured the favour of the governor, and allured volunteers into the service. A considerable reinforcement from that island joined him, and he thought himself in a condition to attempt the discovery.

Difficulty of executing it.

THE isthmus of Darien is not above sixty miles in breadth; but this neck of land, which binds together the continents of North and South America, is strengthened by a chain of lofty mountains stretching through its whole extent, which render it a barrier of solidity sufficient to resist the impulse of two opposite oceans. The mountains are covered with forests almost inaccessible. The valleys in that moist climate, where it rains during two-thirds of the year, are marshy, and so frequently overflowed, that the inhabitants find it necessary, in many places, to build their houses upon trees, in order to be elevated at some distance from the damp soil, and the odious reptiles engendered in the putrid waters.[b] Large rivers rush down with an impetuous current from the high grounds.

[b] P. Martyr, dec. p. 158.

In a region thinly inhabited by wandering savages, the hand of industry had done nothing to mitigate or correct those natural disadvantages. To march across this unexplored country with no other guides but Indians, whose fidelity could be little trusted, was, on all those accounts, the boldest enterprise on which the Spaniards had hitherto ventured in the New World. But the intrepidity of Balboa was such as distinguished him among his countrymen, at a period when every adventurer was conspicuous for daring courage. Nor was bravery his only merit; he was prudent in conduct, generous, affable, and possessed of those popular talents which, in the most desperate undertakings, inspire confidence and secure attachment. Even after the junction of the volunteers from Hispaniola, he was able to muster only an hundred and ninety men for his expedition. But they were hardy veterans, inured to the climate of America, and ready to follow him through every danger. A thousand Indians attended them to carry their provisions; and to complete their warlike array, they took with them several of those fierce dogs, which were no less formidable than destructive to their naked enemies.

1512.

1513.

Discovers the South Sea.

BALBOA set out upon this important expedition on the first of September, about the time

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that the periodical rains began to abate. He proceeded by sea, and without any difficulty, to the territories of a cazique whose friendship he had gained; but no sooner did he begin to advance into the interior part of the country, than he was retarded by every obstacle, which he had reason to apprehend, from the nature of the territory, or the disposition of its inhabitants. Some of the caziques, at his approach, fled to the mountains with all their people, and carried off or destroyed whatever could afford subsistence to his troops. Others collected their subjects, in order to oppose his progress, and he quickly perceived what an arduous undertaking it was to conduct such a body of men through hostile nations, across swamps, and rivers, and woods, which had never been passed but by straggling Indians. But by sharing in every hardship with the meanest soldier, by appearing the foremost to meet every danger, by promising confidently to his troops the enjoyment of honour and riches superior to what had been attained by the most successful of their countrymen, he inspired them with such enthusiastic resolution, that they followed him without murmuring. When they had penetrated a good way into the mountains, a powerful cazique appeared in a narrow pass, with a numerous body of his subjects, to obstruct their progress. But men who

had surmounted so many obstacles, despised the opposition of such feeble enemies. They attacked them with impetuosity, and having dispersed them with much ease and great slaughter, continued their march. Though their guides had represented the breadth of the isthmus to be only a journey of six days, they had already spent twenty-five in forcing their way through the woods and mountains. Many of them were ready to sink under such uninterrupted fatigue in that sultry climate, several were taken ill of the dysentery and other diseases frequent in that country, and all became impatient to reach the period of their labours and sufferings. At length the Indians assured them, that from the top of the next mountain they should discover the ocean which was the object of their wishes. When, with infinite toil, they had climbed up the greater part of that steep ascent, Balboa commanded his men to halt, and advanced alone to the summit, that he might be the first who should enjoy a spectacle which he had so long desired. As soon as he beheld the South Sea stretching in endless prospect below him, he fell on his knees, and lifting up his hands to heaven, returned thanks to God, who had conducted him to a discovery so beneficial to his country, and so honourable to himself. His followers, observing his transports of joy,

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rushed forward to join in his wonder, exultation, and gratitude. They held on their course to the shore with great alacrity, when Balboa advancing up to the middle in the waves with his buckler and sword, took possession of that ocean in the name of the King his master, and vowed to defend it, with these arms, against all his enemies.[c]

THAT part of the great Pacific or Southern ocean, which Balboa first discovered, still retains the name of the Gulf of St. Michael, which he gave to it, and is situated to the east of Panama. From several of the petty Princes, who governed in the districts adjacent to that gulf, he extorted provisions and gold by force of arms. Others sent them to him voluntarily. To these acceptable presents, some of the caziques added a considerable quantity of pearls; and he learned from them, with much satisfaction, that pearl oysters abounded in the sea which he had newly discovered.

He receives information concerning a more opulent country.

TOGETHER with the acquisition of this wealth, which served to soothe and encourage his followers, he received accounts which confirmed his sanguine hopes of future and more extensive

[c] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 1, &c. Gomara, c. 62, &c. P. Martyr, dec. p. 205, &c.

benefits from the expedition. All the people on the coast of the South Sea concurred in informing him that there was a mighty and opulent kingdom situated at a considerable distance towards the south-east, the inhabitants of which had tame animals to carry their burdens. In order to give the Spaniards an idea of these, they drew upon the sand the figure of the Llamas or sheep, afterwards found in Peru, which the Peruvians had taught to perform such services as they described. As the Llama, in its form, nearly resembles a camel, a beast of burden deemed peculiar to Asia, this circumstance, in conjunction with the discovery of the pearls, another noted production of that country, tended to confirm the Spaniards in their mistaken theory with respect to the vicinity of the New World to the East-Indies.[d] 1513.

Obliged to return.

But though the information which Balboa received from the people on the coast, as well as his own conjectures and hopes, rendered him extremely impatient to visit this unknown country, his prudence restrained him from attempting to invade it with an handful of men, exhausted by fatigue, and weakened by

[d] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 2.

BOOK III. 1513. diseases.[c] He determined to lead back his followers, at present, to their settlement of Santa Maria in Darien, and to return next season with a force more adequate to such an arduous enterprise. In order to acquire a more extensive knowledge of the isthmus, he marched back by a different route, which he found to be no less dangerous and difficult than that which he had formerly taken. But to men elated with success, and animated with 1514. hope, nothing is insurmountable. Balboa returned to Santa Maria, from which he had been absent four months, with greater glory and more treasure than the Spaniards had acquired in any expedition in the New World. None of Balboa's officers distinguished themselves more in this service than Francisco Pizarro, or assisted with greater courage and ardour in opening a communication with those countries, in which he was destined to act soon a most illustrious part.[f]

Pedrarias appointed governor of Darien.

BALBOA's first care was to send information to Spain of the important discovery which he had made; and to demand a reinforcement of

[c] See NOTE XXIV.

[f] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 3—6. Gomara, c. 64. P. Martyr, dec. p. 229, &c.

a thousand men, in order to attempt the conquest of that opulent country, concerning which he had received such inviting intelligence. The first account of the discovery of the New World hardly occasioned greater joy, than the unexpected tidings that a passage was at last found to the great southern ocean. The communication with the East-Indies, by a course to the westward of the line of demarcation drawn by the Pope, seemed now to be certain. The vast wealth which flowed into Portugal from its settlements and conquests in that country, excited the envy and called forth the emulation of other states. Ferdinand hoped now to come in for a share in this lucrative commerce, and in his eagerness to obtain it, was willing to make an effort beyond what Balboa required. But even in this exertion, his jealous policy, as well as the fatal antipathy of Fonseca, now Bishop of Burgos, to every man of merit who distinguished himself in the New World, were conspicuous. Notwithstanding Balboa's recent services, which marked him out as the most proper person to finish that great undertaking which he had begun, Ferdinand was so ungenerous as to overlook these, and to appoint Pedrarias Davila, governor of Darien. He gave him the command of fifteen stout vessels, and twelve

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hundred soldiers. These were fitted out at the public expense, with a liberality which Ferdinand had never displayed in any former armament destined for the New World; and such was the ardour of the Spanish gentlemen to follow a leader who was about to conduct them to a country, where, as fame reported, they had only to throw their nets into the sea and draw out gold[g], that fifteen hundred embarked on board the fleet, and if they had not been restrained, a much greater number would have engaged in the service.[h]

PEDRARIAS reached the gulf of Darien without any remarkable accident, and immediately sent some of his principal officers ashore to inform Balboa of his arrival, with the king's commission, to be governor of the colony. To their astonishment, they found Balboa, of whose great exploits they had heard so much, and of whose opulence they had formed such high ideas, clad in a canvas jacket, and wearing coarse hempen sandals used only by the meanest peasants, employed, together with some Indians, in thatching his own hut with reeds. Even in this simple garb, which corresponded so ill with the expectations and wishes of his new guests, Balboa

[g] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 14.

[h] Ibid. c. 6, 7. P. Martyr, dec. p. 177, 296.

received them with dignity. The fame of his discoveries had drawn so many adventurers from the islands, that he could now muster four hundred and fifty men. At the head of those daring veterans, he was more than a match for the forces which Pedrarias brought with him. But though his troops murmured loudly at the injustice of the King in superseding their commander, and complained that strangers would now reap the fruits of their toil and success, Balboa submitted with implicit obedience to the will of his sovereign, and received Pedrarias with all the deference due to his character.[1] 1514.

Dissension between him and Balboa.

NOTWITHSTANDING this moderation, to which Pedrarias owed the peaceable possession of his government, he appointed a judicial inquiry to be made into Balboa's conduct, while under the command of Nicuessa, and imposed a considerable fine upon him, on account of the irregularities of which he had then been guilty. Balboa felt sensibly the mortification of being subjected to trial and to punishment in a place where he had so lately occupied the first station. Pedrarias could not conceal his jealousy of his superior merit; so that the resentment of the one, and the envy of the other, gave rise to

[1] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 13, 14.

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dissensions extremely detrimental to the colony. It was threatened with a calamity still more fatal. Pedrarias had landed in Darien at a most unlucky time of the year, about the middle of the rainy season, in that part of the torrid zone where the clouds pour down such torrents as are unknown in more temperate climates.[k] The village of Santa Maria was seated in a rich plain, environed with marshes and woods. The constitution of Europeans was unable to withstand the pestilential influence of such a situation, in a climate naturally so noxious, and at a season so peculiarly unhealthy. A violent and destructive malady carried off many of the soldiers who accompanied Pedrarias. An extreme scarcity of provision augmented this distress, as it rendered it impossible to find proper refreshment for the sick, or the necessary sustenance for the healthy.[l] In the space of a month, above six hundred persons perished in the utmost misery. Dejection and despair spread through the colony. Many principal persons solicited their dismission, and were glad to relinquish all their hopes of wealth, in order to escape from that pernicious region. Pedrarias endeavoured to divert those who remained from

[k] Richard Hist. Naturelle de l'Air, tom. i. p. 204.

[l] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 14. P. Martyr, decad. p. 272.

brooding over their misfortunes, by finding them employment. With this view, he sent several detachments into the interior parts of the country, to levy gold among the natives, and to search for the mines in which it was produced. Those rapacious adventurers, more attentive to present gain than to the means of facilitating their future progress, plundered without distinction wherever they marched. Regardless of the alliances which Balboa had made with several of the caziques, they stripped them of every thing valuable, and treated them, as well as their subjects, with the utmost insolence and cruelty. By their tyranny and exactions, which Pedrarias, either from want of authority or inclination, did not restrain, all the country from the gulf of Darien to the lake of Nicaragua was desolated, and the Spaniards were inconsiderately deprived of the advantages which they might have derived from the friendship of the natives, in extending their conquests to the South Sea. Balboa, who saw with concern that such ill-judged proceedings retarded the execution of his favourite scheme, sent violent remonstrances to Spain against the imprudent government of Pedrarias, which had ruined a happy and flourishing colony. Pedrarias, on the other hand, accused him of having deceived the King, by magnifying

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his own exploits, as well as by a false representation of the opulence and value of the country.[m]

Violent proceedings against Balboa.

FERDINAND became sensible at length of his imprudence in superseding the most active and experienced officer he had in the New World, and, by way of compensation to Balboa, appointed him *Adelantado*, or Lieutenant-governor of the countries upon the South Sea, with very extensive privileges and authority. At the same time he enjoined Pedrarias to support Balboa in all his operations, and to consult with him concerning every measure which
1515. he himself pursued. But to effect such a sudden transition from inveterate enmity to perfect confidence, exceeded Ferdinand's power. Pedrarias continued to treat his rival with neglect; and Balboa's fortune being exhausted by the payment of his fine, and other exactions of Pedrarias, he could not make suitable preparations for taking possession of his new government. At length, by the interposition and exhortations of the Bishop of Darien, they were brought to a reconciliation; and, in order to cement this union more firmly,

[m] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 15. dec. 2. c. 1, &c. Gomara, c. 66. P. Martyr, dec. 3. c. 10. Relacion de B. de las Casas, p. 12.

Pedrarias agreed to give his daughter in marriage to Balboa. The first effect of their concord was, that Balboa was permitted to make several small incursions into the country. These he conducted with such prudence, as added to the reputation which he had already acquired. Many adventurers resorted to him, and, with the countenance and aid of Pedrarias, he began to prepare for his expedition to the South Sea. In order to accomplish this, it was necessary to build vessels capable of conveying his troops to those provinces which he purposed to invade. After surmounting many obstacles, and enduring a variety of those hardships which were the portion of the conquerors of America, he at length finished four small brigantines. In these, with three hundred chosen men, a force superior to that with which Pizarro afterwards undertook the same expedition, he was ready to sail towards Peru, when he received an unexpected message from Pedrarias.[n] As his reconciliation with Balboa had never been cordial, the progress which his son-in-law was making revived his ancient enmity, and added to its rancour. He dreaded the prosperity and elevation of a man whom he had injured so deeply. He suspected that success would encourage him to aim at independence upon his jurisdiction; and so

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[n] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. i. c. 3. lib. ii. c. 11. 13. 21.

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violently did the passions of hatred, fear, and jealousy, operate upon his mind, that, in order to gratify his vengeance, he scrupled not to defeat an enterprise of the greatest moment to his country. Under pretexts which were false, but plausible, he desired Balboa to postpone his voyage for a short time, and to repair to Acla, in order that he might have an interview with him. Balboa, with the unsuspicious confidence of a man conscious of no crime, instantly obeyed the summons; but as soon as he entered the place, he was arrested by order of Pedrarias, whose impatience to satiate his revenge did not suffer him to languish long in confinement. Judges were immediately appointed to proceed to his trial. An accusation of disloyalty to the King, and of an intention to revolt against the governor, was preferred against him. Sentence of death was pronounced; and though the judges who passed it, seconded by the whole colony, interceded warmly for his pardon, Pedrarias continued inexorable; and the Spaniards beheld, with astonishment and sorrow, the public execution of a man whom they universally deemed more capable than any who had borne command in America, of forming and accomplishing great designs.[o] Upon his death, the

[o] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 21, 22.

expedition which he had planned was relinquished. Pedrarias, notwithstanding the violence and injustice of his proceedings, was not only screened from punishment by the powerful patronage of the Bishop of Burgos and other courtiers, but continued in power. Soon after he obtained permission to remove the colony from its unwholesome station of Santa Maria to Panama, on the opposite side of the isthmus; and though it did not gain much in point of healthfulness by the change, the commodious situation of this new settlement contributed greatly to facilitate the subsequent conquests of the Spaniards in the extensive countries situated upon the southern ocean.[p] 1517.

1515. New discoveries.

During these transactions in Darien, the history of which it was proper to carry on in an uninterrupted tenour, several important events occurred with respect to the discovery, the conquest, and government, of other provinces in the New World. Ferdinand was so intent upon opening a communication with the Molucca or Spice Islands by the west, that, in the year one thousand five hundred and fifteen, he fitted out two ships at his own expense, in order to attempt such a voyage, and gave the command

[p] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 1.

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of them to Juan Diaz de Solis, who was deemed one of the most skilful navigators in Spain. He stood along the coast of South America, and on the first of January one thousand five hundred and sixteen, entered a river which he called Janeiro, where an extensive commerce is now carried on. From thence he proceeded to a spacious bay, which he supposed to be the entrance into a strait that communicated with the Indian ocean; but upon advancing farther, he found it to be the mouth of Rio de Plata, one of the vast rivers by which the southern continent of America is watered. In endeavouring to make a descent in this country, De Solis and several of his crew were slain by the natives, who, in sight of the ships, cut their bodies in pieces, roasted and devoured them. Discouraged with the loss of their commander, and terrified at this shocking spectacle, the surviving Spaniards set sail for Europe, without aiming at any farther discovery.[q] Though this attempt proved abortive, it was not without benefit. It turned the attention of ingenious men to this course of navigation, and prepared the way for a more fortunate voyage, by which a few years posterior to this period, the great design that Ferdinand had in view was accomplished.

[q] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. i. c. 7. P. Martyr, dec. p. 317.

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State of the colony in Hispaniola.

THOUGH the Spaniards were thus actively employed in extending their discoveries and settlements in America, they still considered Hispaniola as their principal colony, and the seat of government. Don Diego Columbus wanted neither inclination nor abilities to have rendered the members of this colony, who were most immediately under his jurisdiction, prosperous and happy. But he was circumscribed in all his operations by the suspicious policy of Ferdinand, who on every occasion, and under pretexts the most frivolous, retrenched his privileges, and encouraged the treasurer, the judges, and other subordinate officers, to counteract his measures, and to dispute his authority. The most valuable prerogative which the governor possessed, was that of distributing Indians among the Spaniards settled in the island. The rigorous servitude of those unhappy men having been but little mitigated by all the regulations in their favour, the power of parcelling out such necessary instruments of labour at pleasure, secured to the governor great influence in the colony. In order to strip him of this, Ferdinand created a new office, with the power of distributing the Indians, and bestowed it upon Rodrigo Albuquerque, a relation of Zapata, his confidential minister. Mortified with the injustice, as well as indignity of this invasion upon his rights,

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in a point so essential, Don Diego could no longer remain in a place where his power and consequence were almost annihilated. He repaired to Spain with the vain hopes of obtaining redress.[r] Albuquerque entered upon his office with all the rapacity of an indigent adventurer, impatient to amass wealth. He began with taking the exact number of Indians in the island, and found that, from sixty thousand, who, in the year one thousand five hundred and eight, survived after all their sufferings, they were now reduced to fourteen thousand. These he threw into separate divisions or lots, and bestowed them upon such as were willing to purchase them at the highest price. By this arbitrary distribution, several of the natives were removed from their original habitations, many were taken from their ancient masters, and all of them subjected to heavier burdens, and to more intolerable labour, in order to reimburse their new proprietors. Those additional calamities completed the misery, and hastened on the extinction of this wretched and innocent race of men.[s]

Controversy with respect to the treatment of the Indians.

THE violence of these proceedings, together with the fatal consequences which attended them, not only excited complaints among such

[r] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 5. lib. x. c. 12.

[s] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 12.

as thought themselves aggrieved, but touched the hearts of all who retained any sentiments of humanity. From the time that ecclesiastics were sent as instructors into America, they perceived that the rigour with which their countrymen treated the natives, rendered their ministry altogether fruitless. The missionaries, in conformity to the mild spirit of that religion which they were employed to publish, early remonstrated against the maxims of the planters with respect to the Americans, and condemned the *repartimientos*, or *distributions*, by which they were given up as slaves to their conquerors, as no less contrary to natural justice and the precepts of Christianity, than to sound policy. The Dominicans, to whom the instruction of the Americans was originally committed, were most vehement in testifying against the *repartimientos*. In the year one thousand five hundred and eleven, Montesino, one of their most eminent preachers, inveighed against this practice, in the great church at St. Domingo, with all the impetuosity of popular eloquence. Don Diego Columbus, the principal officers of the colony, and all the laymen who had been his hearers, complained of the monk to his superiors; but they, instead of condemning, applauded his doctrine, as equally pious and seasonable. The Franciscans, influenced by the spirit of

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opposition and rivalship which subsists between the two orders, discovered some inclination to take part with the laity, and to espouse the defence of the *repartimientos*. But as they could not with decency give their avowed approbation to a system of oppression, so repugnant to the spirit of religion, they endeavoured to palliate what they could not justify, and alleged, in excuse for the conduct of their countrymen, that it was impossible to carry on any improvement in the colony, unless the Spaniards possessed such dominion over the natives, that they could compel them to labour.[t]

Contrary decisions concerning this point.

THE Dominicans, regardless of such political and interested considerations, would not relax in any degree the rigour of their sentiments, and even refused to absolve, or admit to the sacrament, such of their countrymen as continued to hold the natives in servitude.[u] Both parties applied to the King for his decision in a matter of such importance. Ferdinand empowered a committee of his privy-council, assisted by some of the most eminent civilians and divines in Spain, to hear the deputies sent from Hispaniola, in support of their respective opinions. After a

[t] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. viii. c. 11. Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6. p. 97.

[u] Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6. p. 97.

long discussion, the speculative point in controversy was determined in favour of the Dominicans, the Indians were declared to be a free people, entitled to all the natural rights of men; but notwithstanding this decision, the *repartimientos* were continued upon their ancient footing.[w] As this determination admitted the principle upon which the Dominicans founded their opinion, they renewed their efforts to obtain relief for the Indians with additional boldness and zeal. At length, in order to quiet the colony, which was alarmed by their remonstrances and censures, Ferdinand issued a decree of his privy council, declaring, that after mature consideration of the Apostolic Bull, and other titles by which the crown of Castile claimed a right to its possessions in the New World, the servitude of the Indians was warranted both by the laws of God and of man; that unless they were subjected to the dominion of the Spaniards, and compelled to reside under their inspection, it would be impossible to reclaim them from idolatry, or to instruct them in the principles of the Christian faith; that no farther scruple ought to be entertained concerning the lawfulness of the *repartimientos*, as the King and council were willing to take the charge of

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[w] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. viii. c. 12. lib. ix. c. 5.

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that upon their own consciences; and that therefore the Dominicans, and monks of other religious orders, should abstain, for the future, from those invectives, which, from an excess of charitable but ill-informed zeal, they had uttered against that practice. [y]

THAT his intention of adhering to this decree might be fully understood, Ferdinand conferred new grants of Indians upon several of his courtiers. [z] But in order that he might not seem altogether inattentive to the rights of humanity, he published an edict, in which he endeavoured to provide for the mild treatment of the Indians under the yoke to which he subjected them; he regulated the nature of the work which they should be required to perform; he prescribed the mode in which they should be clothed and fed, and gave directions with respect to their instruction in the principles of Christianity. [a]

Effect of these.

BUT the Dominicans, who, from their experience of what was passed, judged concerning the future, soon perceived the inefficacy of those provisions, and foretold, that as long as it was the interest of individuals to treat the Indians with rigour, no public regulations could render

[y] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 14. [z] See NOTE XXV.
[a] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 14.

their servitude mild or tolerable. They considered it as vain to waste to their own time and strength in attempting to communicate the sublime truths of religion to men, whose spirits were broken, and their faculties impaired by oppression. Some of them, in despair, requested the permission of their superiors to remove to the continent, and to pursue the object of their mission among such of the natives as were not hitherto corrupted by the example of the Spaniards, or alienated by their cruelty from the Christian faith. Such as remained in Hispaniola continued to remonstrate, with decent firmness, against the servitude of the Indians.[b]

Bartholomew de las Casas appears in defence of the Indians.

THE violent operations of Albuquerque, the new distributor of Indians, revived the zeal of the Dominicans against the *repartimientos*, and called forth an advocate for that oppressed people, who possessed all the courage, the talents, and activity requisite in supporting such a desperate cause. This was Bartholomew de las Casas, a native of Seville, and one of the clergymen sent out with Columbus in his second voyage to Hispaniola, in order to settle in that island. He early adopted the opinion prevalent among ecclesiastics, with respect to

[b] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 14. Touron. Hist. Gener. de l'Amerique, tom. i. p. 252.

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the unlawfulness of reducing the natives to servitude; and that he might demonstrate the sincerity of his conviction, he relinquished all the Indians who had fallen to his own share in the division of the inhabitants among their conquerors, declaring that he should ever bewail his own misfortune and guilt, in having exercised for a moment this impious dominion over his fellow-creatures.[c] From that time, he became the avowed patron of the Indians; and by his bold interpositions in their behalf, as well as by the respect due to his abilities and character, he had often the merit of setting some bounds to the excesses of his countrymen. He did not fail to remonstrate warmly against the proceedings of Albuquerque, and, though he soon found that attention to his own interest rendered this rapacious officer deaf to admonition, he did not abandon the wretched people whose cause he had espoused. He instantly set out for Spain, with the most sanguine hopes of opening the eyes and softening the heart of Ferdinand, by that striking picture of the oppression of his new subjects, which he would exhibit to his view.[d]

[c] Fr. Aug. Davila Padilla Hist. de la Fundacion de la Provincia de St. Jago de Mexico, p. 303, 304. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 12.

[d] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 12. Dec. 2. lib. i. c. 11. Davila Padilla Hist. p. 304.

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He easily obtained admittance to the King, whom he found in a declining state of health. With much freedom, and no less eloquence, he represented to him all the fatal effects of the *repartimientos* in the New World, boldly charging him with the guilt of having authorised this impious measure, which had brought misery and destruction upon a numerous and innocent race of men, whom Providence had placed under his protection. Ferdinand, whose mind as well as body was much enfeebled by his distemper, was greatly alarmed at this charge of impiety, which at another juncture he would have despised. He listened with deep compunction to the discourse of Las Casas, and promised to take into serious consideration the means of redressing the evil of which he complained. But death prevented him from executing his resolution. Charles of Austria, to whom all his crowns devolved, resided at that time in his paternal dominions in the Low-Countries. Las Casas, with his usual ardour, prepared immediately to set out for Flanders, in order to occupy the ear of the young monarch, when Cardinal Ximenes, who, as regent, assumed the reins of government in Castile, commanded him to desist from the journey, and engaged to hear his complaints in person.

Solicits their cause in the court of Spain.

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He accordingly weighed the matter with attention equal to its importance; and as his impetuous mind delighted in schemes bold and uncommon, he soon fixed upon a plan which astonished the ministers, trained up under the formal and cautious administration of Ferdinand. Without regarding either the rights of Don Diego Columbus, or the regulations established by the late King, he resolved to send three persons to America as superintendants of all the colonies there, with authority, after examining all circumstances on the spot, to decide finally with respect to the point in question. It was a matter of deliberation and delicacy to choose men qualified for such an important station. As all the laymen settled in America, or who had been consulted in the administration of that department, had given their opinion that the Spaniards could not keep possession of their new settlements, unless they were allowed to retain their dominion over the Indians, he saw that he could not rely on their impartiality, and determined to commit the trust to ecclesiastics. As the Dominicans and Franciscans had already espoused opposite sides in the controversy, he, from the same principle of impartiality, excluded both these fraternities from the commission. He confined his choice to the monks

of St. Jerome, a small, but respectable order in Spain. With the assistance of their general, and in concert with Las Casas, he soon pitched upon three persons whom he deemed equal to the charge. To them he joined Zuazo, a private lawyer of distinguished probity, with unbounded power to regulate all judicial proceedings in the colonies. Las Casas was appointed to accompany them, with the title of protector of the Indians.[e] 1517.

The manner in which they were executed.

To vest such extraordinary powers, as might at once overturn the system of government established in the New World, in four persons, who, from their humble condition in life, were little entitled to possess this high authority, appeared to Zapata, and other ministers of the late King, a measure so wild and dangerous, that they refused to issue the dispatches necessary for carrying it into execution. But Ximenes was not of a temper patiently to brook opposition to any of his schemes. He sent for the refractory ministers, and addresed them in such a tone, that in the utmost consternation they obeyed his orders.[f] The superintendents, with their associate Zuazo, and Las Casas, sailed for St. Domingo. Upon their arrival, the first act of their authority was to set at

[e] Herrera, dec. 2, lib. ii. c. 3. [f] Ibid. c. 6.

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liberty all the Indians who had been granted to the Spanish courtiers, or to any person not residing in America. This, together with the information which had been received from Spain concerning the object of the commission, spread a general alarm. The colonists concluded that they were to be deprived at once of the hands with which they carried on their labour, and that, of consequence, ruin was unavoidable. But the fathers of St. Jerome proceeded with such caution and prudence, as soon dissipated all their fears. They discovered, in every step of their conduct, a knowledge of the world, and of affairs, which is seldom acquired in a cloister; and displayed a moderation as well as gentleness still more rare among persons trained up in the solitude and austerity of a monastic life. Their ears were open to information from every quarter; they compared the different accounts which they received; and, after a mature consideration of the whole, they were fully satisfied that the state of the colony rendered it impossible to adopt the plan proposed by Las Casas, and recommended by the Cardinal. They plainly perceived that the Spaniards settled in America were so few in number, that they could neither work the mines which had been opened, nor cultivate the country; that they depended for effecting both upon the labour of the natives, and if deprived

of it, they must instantly relinquish their conquests, or give up all the advantages which they derived from them; that no allurement was so powerful as to surmount the natural aversion of the Indians to any laborious effort, and that nothing but the authority of a master could compel them to work; and if they were not kept constantly under the eye and discipline of a superior, so great was their natural listlessness and indifference, that they would neither attend to religious instruction, nor observe those rites of Christianity which they had been already taught. Upon all those accounts, the superintendents found it necessary to tolerate the *repartimientos*, and to suffer the Indians to remain under subjection to their Spanish masters. They used their utmost endeavours, however, to prevent the fatal effects of this establishment, and to secure to the Indians the consolation of the best treatment compatible with a state of servitude. For this purpose, they revived former regulations, they prescribed new ones, they neglected no circumstance that tended to mitigate the rigour of the yoke; and by their authority, their example, and their exhortations, they laboured to inspire their countrymen with sentiments of equity and gentleness towards the unhappy people upon whose industry they depended. Zuazo, in his department, seconded the endea- 1517.

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vours of the superintendents. He reformed the courts of justice, in such a manner as to render their decisions equitable as well as expeditious, and introduced various regulations which greatly improved the interior police of the colony. The satisfaction which his conduct, and that of the superintendents gave, was now universal among the Spaniards settled in the New World, and all admired the boldness of Ximenes, in having departed from the ordinary path of business in forming his plan, as well as his sagacity in pitching upon persons, whose wisdom, moderation, and disinterestedness rendered them worthy of this high trust.[g]

Las Casas dissatisfied with them.

Las Casas alone was dissatisfied. The prudential considerations which influenced the superintendents, made no impression upon him. He regarded their idea of accommodating their conduct to the state of the colony, as the maxim of an unhallowed timid policy, which tolerated what was unjust because it was beneficial. He contended that the Indians were by nature free, and as their protector, he required the superintendents not to bereave them of the common privilege of humanity. They received his most virulent remonstrances without emotion, but

[g] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 15. Remesal Hist. Gener. lib. ii. c. 14, 15, 16.

adhered firmly to their own system. The Spanish planters did not bear with him so patiently, and were ready to tear him in pieces for insisting in a requisition so odious to them. Las Casas, in order to screen himself from their rage, found it necessary to take shelter in a convent; and perceiving that all his efforts in America were fruitless, he soon set out for Europe, with a fixed resolution not to abandon the protection of a people whom he deemed to be cruelly oppressed.[b]

His negotiations with the ministers of Charles V.

Had Ximenes retained that vigour of mind with which he usually applied to business, Las Casas must have met with no very gracious reception upon his return to Spain. But he found the Cardinal languishing under a mortal distemper, and preparing to resign his authority to the young King, who was daily expected from the Low-Countries. Charles arrived, took possession of the government, and, by the death of Ximenes, lost a minister, whose abilities and integrity entitled him to direct his affairs. Many of the Flemish nobility had accompanied their sovereign to Spain. From that warm predilection to his countrymen, which was natural at his age, he consulted them with respect to all the trans-

[b] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 16.

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actions in his new kingdom, and they, with an indiscreet eagerness, intruded themselves into every business, and seized almost every department of administration.[1] The direction of American affairs was an object too alluring to escape their attention. Las Casas observed their growing influence, and though projectors are usually too sanguine to conduct their schemes with much dexterity, he possessed a bustling, indefatigable activity, which sometimes accomplishes its purposes with greater success than the most exquisite discernment and address. He courted the Flemish ministers with assiduity. He represented to them the absurdity of all the maxims hitherto adopted with respect to the government of America, particularly during the administration of Ferdinand, and pointed out the defects of those arrangements which Ximenes had introduced. The memory of Ferdinand was odious to the Flemings. The superior virtue and abilities of Ximenes had long been the object of their envy. They fondly wished to have a plausible pretext for condemning the measures, both of the monarch and of the minister, and of reflecting some discredit on their political wisdom. The friends of Don Diego Columbus, as well as the Spanish

[1] History of Charles V. vol. ii. p. 43.

courtiers, who had been dissatisfied with the Cardinal's administration, joined Las Casas in censuring the scheme of sending superintendents to America. This union of so many interests and passions was irresistible; and in consequence of it the fathers of St. Jerome, together with their associate Zuazo, were recalled. Roderigo de Figueroa, a lawyer of some eminence, was appointed chief judge of the island, and received instructions, in compliance with the request of Las Casas, to examine once more, with the utmost attention, the point in controversy between him and the people of the colony, with respect to the treatment of the natives; and in the mean time to do every thing in his power to alleviate their sufferings, and prevent the extinction of the race.[k]

1517.

THIS was all that the zeal of Las Casas could procure at that juncture in favour of the Indians. The impossibility of carrying on any improvements in America, unless the Spanish planters could command the labour of the natives, was an insuperable objection to his plan of treating them as free subjects. In order to provide some remedy for this, without which he found it was in vain to mention

Scheme of supplying the colonies with negroes.

[k] Herrara, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 16. 19. 21. lib. iii. c. 7, 8.

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his scheme, Las Casas proposed to purchase a sufficient number of negroes from the Portuguese settlements on the coast of Africa, and to transport them to America, in order that they might be employed as slaves in working the mines and cultivating the ground. One of the first advantages which the Portuguese had derived from their discoveries in Africa, arose from the trade in slaves. Various circumstances concurred in reviving this odious commerce, which had been long abolished in Europe, and which is no less repugnant to the feelings of humanity, than to the principles of religion. As early as the year one thousand five hundred and three, a few negro slaves had been sent into the New World.[l] In the year one thousand five hundred and eleven, Ferdinand permitted the importation of them in greater numbers.[m] They were found to be a more robust and hardy race than the natives of America. They were more capable of enduring fatigue, more patient under servitude, and the labour of one negro was computed to be equal to that of four Indians.[n] Cardinal Ximenes, however, when solicited to encourage this commerce, peremptorily rejected the proposition, because he perceived the iniquity of reducing one

[l] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. v. c. 12. [m] Ibid. lib. viii. c. 9.
[n] Ibid. lib. ix. c. 5.

race of men to slavery, while he was consulting about the means of restoring liberty to another.[n] But Las Casas, from the inconsistency natural to men who hurry with headlong impetuosity towards a favourite point, was incapable of making this distinction. While he contended earnestly for the liberty of the people born in one quarter of the globe, he laboured to enslave the inhabitants of another region; and in the warmth of his zeal to save the Americans from the yoke, pronounced it to be lawful and expedient to impose one still heavier upon the Africans. Unfortunately for the latter, Las Casas's plan was adopted. Charles granted a patent to one of his Flemish favourites, containing an exclusive right of importing four thousand negroes into America. The favourite sold his patent to some Genoese merchants for twenty-five thousand ducats, and they were the first who brought into a regular form that commerce for slaves between Africa and America, which has since been carried on to such an amazing extent.[o]

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1518. Las Casas proposes sending labourers to Hispaniola.

But the Genoese merchants, conducting their operations, at first, with the rapacity of monopolists, demanded such an high price for negroes, that the number imported into Hispaniola made no great change upon the state of the colony.

[n] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 8. [o] Ibid. dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 20.

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Las Casas, whose zeal was no less inventive than indefatigable, had recourse to another expedient for the relief of the Indians. He observed, that most of the persons who had settled hitherto in America, were sailors and soldiers employed in the discovery or conquest of the country; the younger sons of noble families, allured by the prospect of acquiring sudden wealth; or desperate adventurers, whom their indigence or crimes forced to abandon their native land. Instead of such men, who were dissolute, rapacious, and incapable of that sober persevering industry, which is requisite in forming new colonies, he proposed to supply the settlements in Hispaniola and other parts of the New World with a sufficient number of labourers and husbandmen, who should be allured by suitable premiums to remove thither. These, as they were accustomed to fatigue, would be able to perform the work, to which the Indians, from the feebleness of their constitution, were unequal, and might soon become useful and opulent citizens. But though Hispaniola stood much in need of a recruit of inhabitants, having been visited at this time with the small pox, which swept off almost all the natives who had survived their long continued oppression; and though Las Casas had the countenacce of the Flemish ministers, this

scheme was defeated by the Bishop of Burgos, who thwarted all his projects.[p] BOOK III. 1517.

Las Casas now despaired of procuring any relief for the Indians in those places where the Spaniards were already settled. The evil was become so inveterate there, as not to admit of a cure. But such discoveries were daily making in the continent, as gave an high idea both of its extent and populousness. In all those vast regions there was but one feeble colony planted; and except a small spot on the isthmus of Darien, the natives still occupied the whole country. This opened a new and more ample field for the humanity and zeal of Las Casas, who flattered himself that he might prevent a pernicious system from being introduced there, though he had failed of success in his attempts to overturn it, where it was already established. Full of this idea, he applied for a grant of the unoccupied country, stretching along the sea-coast from the gulf of Paria, to the western frontier of that province now known by the name of Santa Martha. He proposed to settle there with a colony composed of husbandmen, labourers, and ecclesiastics. He engaged, in the space of two years, to civilise ten thousand of the natives, and to

Forms the idea of a new colony.

[p] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 21.

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instruct them so thoroughly in the arts of social life, that, from the fruits of their industry, an annual revenue of fifteen thousand ducats should arise to the King. In ten years he expected that his improvements would be so far advanced, as to yield annually sixty thousand ducats. He stipulated, that no sailor or soldier should ever be permitted to settle in this district; and that no Spaniard whatever should enter it without his permission. He even projected to clothe the people whom he took along with him in some distinguishing garb, which did not resemble the Spanish dress, that they might appear to the natives to be a different race of men from those who had brought so many calamities upon their country.[q] From this scheme, of which I have traced only the great lines, it is manifest that Las Casas had formed ideas concerning the method of treating the Indians, similar to those by which the Jesuits afterwards carried on their great operations in another part of the same continent. He supposed that the Europeans, by availing themselves of that ascendant which they possessed in consequence of their superior progress in science and improvement, might gradually form the minds of the Americans to relish those comforts of which they were destitute,

[q] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 2.

might train them to the arts of civil life, and render them capable of its functions.

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Favourably received.

But to the Bishop of Burgos and the council of the Indies, this project appeared not only chimerical, but dangerous in a high degree. They deemed the faculties of the Americans to be naturally so limited, and their indolence so excessive, that every attempt to instruct or to improve them would be fruitless. They contended, that it would be extremely imprudent to give the command of a country extending above a thousand miles along the coast, to a fanciful presumptuous enthusiast, a stranger to the affairs of the world, and unacquainted with the arts of government. Las Casas, far from being discouraged with a repulse, which he had reason to expect, had recourse once more to the Flemish favourites, who zealously patronised his scheme, merely because it had been rejected by the Spanish ministers. They prevailed with their master, who had lately been raised to the Imperial dignity, to refer the consideration of this measure to a select number of his privy-counsellors; and Las Casas having excepted against the members of the council of the Indies, as partial and interested, they were all excluded. The decision of men chosen by recommendation of the Flemings, was perfectly conformable to their sentiments.

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They warmly approved of Las Casas's plan; and gave orders for carrying it into execution, but restricted the territory allotted him to three hundred miles along the coast of Cumana, allowing him, however, to extend it as far as he pleased towards the interior part of the country.[r]

A solemn deliberation concerning the mode of treating the Indians.

THIS determination did not pass uncensured. Almost every person who had been in the West-Indies exclaimed against it, and supported their opinion so confidently, and with such plausible reasons, as made it advisable to pause and to review the subject more deliberately. Charles himself, though accustomed, at this early period of his life, to adopt the sentiments of his ministers, with such submissive deference as did not promise that decisive vigour of mind which distinguished his riper years, could not help suspecting that the eagerness with which the Flemings took part in every affair relating to America, flowed from some improper motive, and began to discover an inclination to examine in person into the state of the question concerning the character of the Americans, and the proper manner of treating them. An oppor-

June 20.

[r] Gomara Hist. Gener. c. 77. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 3. Oviedo, lib. xix. c. 5.

tunity of making this inquiry with great advantage soon occurred. Quevedo, the Bishop of Darien, who had accompanied Pedrarias to the continent in the year one thousand five hundred and thirteen, happened to land at Barcelona, where the court then resided. It was quickly known, that his sentiments concerning the talents and disposition of the Indians differed from those of Las Casas: and Charles naturally concluded that by confronting two respectable persons, who, during their residence in America, had full leisure to observe the manners of the people whom they pretended to describe, he might be able to discover which of them had formed his opinion with the greatest discernment and accuracy. 1517.

A DAY for this solemn audience was appointed. The Emperor appeared with extraordinary pomp, and took his seat on a throne in the great hall of the palace. His principal courtiers attended. Don Diego Columbus, admiral of the Indies, was summoned to be present. The Bishop of Darien was called upon first to deliver his opinion. He, in a short discourse, lamented the fatal desolation of America, by the extinction of so many of its inhabitants; he acknowledged that this must be imputed, in some degree, to the excessive rigour

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and inconsiderate proceedings of the Spaniards; but declared that all the people of the New World whom he had seen either in the continent or in the islands, appeared to him to be a race of men marked out, by the inferiority of their talents, for servitude, and whom it would be impossible to instruct or improve, unless they were kept under the continual inspection of a master. Las Casas, at greater length, and with more fervour, defended his own system. He rejected within dignation the idea that any race of men was born to servitude, as irreligious and inhuman. He asserted that the faculties of the Americans were not naturally despicable, but unimproved; that they were capable of receiving instruction in the principles of religion, as well as of acquiring the industry and arts which would qualify them for the various offices of social life; that the mildness and timidity of their nature rendered them so submissive and docile, that they might be led and formed with a gentle hand. He professed, that his intentions in proposing the scheme now under consideration were pure and disinterested; and though, from the accomplishment of his designs, inestimable benefits would result to the crown of Castile, he never had claimed, nor ever would receive, any recompense on that account.

CHARLES, after hearing both, and consulting with his ministers, did not think himself sufficiently informed to establish any general arrangement with respect to the state of the Indians; but as he had perfect confidence in the integrity of Las Casas, and as even the Bishop of Darien admitted his scheme to be of such importance, that a trial should be made of its effects, he issued a patent, granting him the district in Cumana formerly mentioned, with full power to establish a colony there according to his own plan.[1] 1517. The scheme of Las Casas approved of. 1522.

LAS CASAS pushed on the preparations for his voyage with his usual ardour. But, either from his own inexperience in the conduct of affairs, or from the secret opposition of the Spanish nobility, who universally dreaded the success of an institution that might rob them of the industrious and useful hands which cultivated their estates, his progress in engaging husbandmen and labourers was extremely slow, and he could not prevail on more than two hundred to accompany him to Cumana. His preparations for executing it.

NOTHING, however, could damp his zeal. With this slender train, hardly sufficient to take Departs for America, and meets with formidable obstacles.

[1] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 3, 4, 5. Argensola Annales d'Aragon, 74. 97. Remisal Hist. Gener. lib. ii. c. 19, 20.

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possession of such a large territory, and altogether unequal to any effectual attempt towards civilising its inhabitants, he set sail. The first place at which he touched was the island of Puerto Rico. There he received an account of a new obstacle to the execution of his scheme, more insuperable than any he had hitherto encountered. When he left America in the year one thousand five hundred and sixteen, the Spaniards had little intercourse with any part of the continent, except the countries adjacent to the gulf of Darien. But as every species of internal industry began to stagnate in Hispaniola, when, by the rapid decrease of the natives, the Spaniards were deprived of those hands with which they had hitherto carried on their operations, this prompted them to try various expedients for supplying that loss. Considerable numbers of negroes were imported; but on account of their exorbitant price, many of the planters could not afford to purchase them. In order to procure slaves at an easier rate, some of the Spaniards in Hispaniola fitted out vessels to cruise along the coast of the continent. In places where they found themselves inferior in strength, they traded with the natives, and gave European toys in exchange for the plates of gold worn by them as ornaments; but, wherever they could surprise or overpower the Indians, they

carried them off by force, and sold them as slaves.[t] In those predatory excursions, such atrocious acts of violence and cruelty had been committed, that the Spanish name was held in detestation all over the continent. Whenever any ships appeared, the inhabitants either fled to the woods, or rushed down to the shore in arms to repel those hated disturbers of their tranquillity. They forced some parties of the Spaniards to retreat with precipitation; they cut off others; and in the violence of their resentment against the whole nation, they murdered two Dominican missionaries, whose zeal had prompted them to settle in the province of Cumana.[u] This outrage against persons revered for their sanctity, excited such indignation among the people of Hispaniola, who, notwithstanding all their licentious and cruel proceedings, were possessed with a wonderful zeal for religion, and a superstitious respect for its ministers, that they determined to inflict exemplary punishment, not only upon the perpetrators of that crime, but upon the whole race. With this view, they gave the command of five ships and three hundred men to Diego Ocampo, with orders to lay waste the country of Cumana with fire and sword, and to transport all the inhabitants as slaves

1517.

[t] Herrera, dec. 3. lib. ii. c. 3.

[u] Oviedo, Hist. lib. xix. p. 3.

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to Hispaniola. This armament Las Casas found at Puerto Rico, in its way to the continent; and as Ocampo refused to defer his voyage, he immediately perceived that it would be impossible to attempt the execution of his pacific plan in a country destined to be the seat of war and desolation. [x]

12th April. Labours to surmount them.

In order to provide against the effects of this unfortunate incident, he set sail directly for St. Domingo, leaving his followers cantoned out among the planters in Puerto Rico. From many concurring causes, the reception which Las Casas met with in Hispaniola was very unfavourable. In his negotiations for the relief of the Indians, he had censured the conduct of his countrymen settled there with such honest severity as rendered him universally odious to them. They considered their own ruin as the inevitable consequence of his success. They were now elated with hope of receiving a large recruit of slaves from Cumana, which must be relinquished if Las Casas were assisted in settling his projected colony there. Figueroa, in consequence of the instructions which he had received in Spain, had made an experiment concerning the capacity of the Indians, that was represented as decisive

[x] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ix. c. 8, 9.

against the system of Las Casas. He collected in Hispaniola a good number of the natives, and settled them in two villages, leaving them at perfect liberty, and with the uncontrolled direction of their own actions. But that people, accustomed to a mode of life extremely different from that which takes place wherever civilisation has made any considerable progress, were incapable of assuming new habits at once. Dejected with their own misfortunes as well as those of their country, they exerted so little industry in cultivating the ground, appeared so devoid of solicitude or foresight in providing for their own wants, and were such strangers to arrangement in conducting their affairs, that the Spaniards pronounced them incapable of being formed to live like men in social life, and considered them as children, who should be kept under the perpetual tutelage of persons superior to themselves in wisdom and sagacity. [y]

Final miscarriage of his scheme.

NOTWITHSTANDING all those circumstances, which alienated the persons in Hispaniola to whom Las Casas applied from himself and from his measures, he, by his activity and perseverance, by some concessions, and many threats, obtained at length a small body of troops to

[y] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 5.

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protect him and his colony at their first landing. But upon his return to Puerto Rico, he found that the diseases of the climate had been fatal to several of his people; and that others having got employment in that island, refused to follow him. With the handful that remained, he set sail and landed in Cumana. Ocampo had executed his commission in that province with such barbarous rage, having massacred many of the inhabitants, sent others in chains to Hispaniola, and forced the rest to fly for shelter to the woods, that the people of a small colony, which he had planted at a place which he named *Toledo*, were ready to perish for want in a desolated country. There, however, Las Casas was obliged to fix his residence, though deserted both by the troops appointed to protect him, and by those under the command of Ocampo, who foresaw and dreaded the calamities to which he must be exposed in that wretched station. He made the best provision in his power for the safety and subsistence of his followers; but as his utmost efforts availed little towards securing either the one or the other, he returned to Hispaniola, in order to solicit more effectual aid for the preservation of men who, from confidence in him, had ventured into a post of so much danger. Soon after his departure, the natives, having discovered the feeble and defenceless state of

the Spaniards, assembled secretly, attacked them with the fury natural to men exasperated by many injuries, cut off a good number, and compelled the rest to fly in the utmost consternation to the island of Cubagua. The small colony settled there, on account of the pearl fishery, catching the panic with which their countrymen had been seized, abandoned the island, and not a Spaniard remained in any part of the continent, or adjacent islands, from the gulf of Paria to the borders of Darien. Astonished at such a succession of disasters, Las Casas was ashamed to show his face after this fatal termination of all his splendid schemes. He shut himself up in the convent of the Dominicans at St. Domingo, and soon after assumed the habit of that order.[z] 1517.

THOUGH the expulsion of the colony from Cumana happened in the year one thousand five hundred and twenty-one, I have chosen to trace the progress of Las Casas's negotiations from their first rise to their final issue without interruption. His system was the object of long and attentive discussion; and though his efforts in behalf of the oppressed Americans, partly

[z] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 5. dec. 3. lib. ii. c. 3, 4, 5. Oviedo Hist. lib. xix. c. 5. Gomara, c. 77. Davila Padilla, lib. i. c. 97. Remisal Hist. Gen. lib. xi. c. 22, 23.

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from his own rashness and imprudence, and partly from the malevolent opposition of his adversaries, were not attended with that success which he promised with too sanguine confidence, great praise is due to his humane activity, which gave rise to various regulations that were of some benefit to that unhappy people. I return now to the history of the Spanish discoveries, as they occur in the order of time.[a]

New discoveries towards the west.

DIEGO VELASQUEZ, who conquered Cuba in the year one thousand five hundred and eleven, still retained the government of that island, as the deputy of Don Diego Columbus, though he seldom acknowledged his superior, and aimed at rendering his own authority altogether independent.[b] Under his prudent administration, Cuba became one of the most flourishing of the Spanish settlements. The fame of this allured thither many persons from the other colonies, in hopes of finding either some permanent establishment or some employment for their activity. As Cuba lay to the west of all the islands occupied by the Spaniards, and as the ocean, which stretches beyond it towards that quarter, had not hitherto been explored, these circumstances naturally invited the in-

[a] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 5. p. 329.

[b] Ibid. lib. ii. c. 19.

habitants to attempt new discoveries. An expedition for this purpose, in which activity and resolution might conduct to sudden wealth, was more suited to the genius of the age, than the patient industry requisite in clearing ground, and manufacturing sugar. Instigated by this spirit, several officers, who had served under Pedrarias in Darien, entered into an association to undertake a voyage of discovery. They persuaded Francisco Hernandez Cordova, an opulent planter in Cuba, and a man of distinguished courage, to join with them in the adventure, and chose him to be their commander. Velasquez not only approved of the design, but assisted in carrying it on. As the veterans from Darien were extremely indigent, he and Cordova advanced money for purchasing three small vessels, and furnishing them with every thing requisite either for traffic or for war. A hundred and ten men embarked on board of them, and sailed from St. Jago de Cuba on the eighth of February one thousand five hundred and seventeen. By the advice of their chief pilot, Antonio Alaminos, who had served under the first admiral Columbus, they stood directly west, relying on the opinion of that great navigator, who uniformly maintained that a westerly course would lead to the most important discoveries.

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On the twenty-first day after their departure from St. Jago, they saw land, which proved to be *Cape Catoche*, the eastern point of that large peninsula projecting from the continent of America, which still retains its original name of *Yucatan*. As they approached the shore, five canoes came off full of people decently clad in cotton garments; an astonishing spectacle to the Spaniards, who had found every other part of America possessed by naked savages. Cordova endeavoured by small presents to gain the good will of these people. They, though amazed at the strange objects now presented for the first time to their view, invited the Spaniards to visit their habitations, with an appearance of cordiality. They landed accordingly, and as they advanced into the country, they observed with new wonder some large houses built with stone. But they soon found that, if the people of Yucatan had made progress in improvement beyond their countrymen, they were likewise more artful and warlike. For though the cazique received Cordova with many tokens of friendship, he had posted a considerable body of his subjects in ambush behind a thicket, who, upon a signal given by him, rushed out and attacked the Spaniards with great boldness, and some degree of martial order. At the first flight of their arrows, fifteen of the Spaniards were

Yucatan.

wounded; but the Indians were struck with such terror by the sudden explosion of the fire-arms, and so surprised at the execution done by them, by the cross-bows, and by the other weapons of their new enemies, that they fled precipitately. Cordova quitted a country where he had met with such a fierce reception, carrying off two prisoners, together with the ornaments of a small temple, which he plundered in his retreat. 1517.

He continued his course towards the west, without losing sight of the coast, and on the sixteenth day arrived at Campeachy. There the natives received them more hospitably; but the Spaniards were much surprised, that on all the extensive coast along which they had sailed, and which they imagined to be a large island, they had not observed any river.[c] As their water began to fail, they advanced, in hopes of finding a supply; and at length they discovered the mouth of a river at Potonchan, some leagues beyond Campeachy. Campeachy.

Cordova landed all his troops, in order to protect the sailors while employed in filling the casks; but notwithstanding this precaution, the natives rushed down upon them with such

[c] See NOTE XXVI.

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fury, and in such numbers, that forty-seven of the Spaniards were killed upon the spot, and one man only of the whole body escaped unhurt. Their commander, though wounded in twelve different places, directed the retreat with presence of mind equal to the courage with which he had led them on in the engagement, and with much difficulty they regained their ships. After this fatal repulse, nothing remained but to hasten back to Cuba with their shattered forces. In their passage thither they suffered the most exquisite distress for want of water, that men wounded and sickly, shut up in small vessels, and exposed to the heat of the torrid zone, can be supposed to endure. Some of them, sinking under these calamities, died by the way; Cordova, their commander, expired soon after they landed in Cuba.[d]

Voyage of Grijalva.

NOTWITHSTANDING the disastrous conclusion of this expedition, it contributed rather to animate than to damp a spirit of enterprise among the Spaniards. They had discovered an extensive country, situated at no great distance from Cuba, fertile in appearance, and

[d] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 17, 18. Histor. Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva Espana por Bernal Diaz del Castillo, cap. 1—7. Oviedo, lib. xvii. c. 3. Gomara, c. 52. P. Martyr de Insulis nuper inventis, p. 329.

possessed by a people far superior in improvement to any hitherto known in America. Though they had carried on little commercial intercourse with the natives, they had brought off some ornaments of gold, not considerable in value, but of singular fabric. These circumstances, related with the exaggeration natural to men desirous of heightening the merit of their own exploits, were more than sufficient to excite romantic hopes and expectations. Great numbers offered to engage in a new expedition. Velasquez, solicitous to distinguish himself by some service so meritorious as might entitle him to claim the government of Cuba independent of the admiral, not only encouraged their ardour, but at his own expense fitted out four ships for the voyage. Two hundred and forty volunteers, among whom were several persons of rank and fortune, embarked in this enterprise. The command of it was given to Juan de Grijalva, a young man of known merit and courage, with instructions to observe attentively the nature of the countries which he should discover, to barter for gold, and, if circumstances were inviting, to settle a colony in some proper station. He sailed from St. Jago de Cuba on the eighth of April, one thousand five hundred and eighteen. The pilot Alaminos held the

BOOK III. 1517. 1518.

BOOK III.

1518. Discovers New Spain.

same course as in the former voyage; but the violence of the currents carrying the ships to the south, the first land which they made was the island of *Cozumel*, to the east of Yucatan. As all the inhabitants fled to the woods and mountains at the approach of the Spaniards, they made no long stay there, and without any remarkable occurrence they reached Potonchan on the opposite side of the Peninsula. The desire of avenging their countrymen who had been slain there, concurred with their ideas of good policy, in prompting them to land, that they might chastise the Indians of that district with such exemplary rigour, as would strike terror into all the people around them. But though they disembarked all their troops, and carried ashore some field-pieces, the Indians fought with such courage, that the Spaniards gained the victory with difficulty, and were confirmed in their opinion that the inhabitants of this country would prove more formidable enemies than any they had met with in other parts of America. From Potonchan, they continued their voyage towards the west, keeping as near as possible to the shore, and casting anchor every evening, from dread of the dangerous accidents to which they might be exposed in an unknown sea. During the day their eyes were turned continually

towards land, with a mixture of surprise and wonder at the beauty of the country, as well as the novelty of the objects which they beheld. Many villages were scattered along the coast, in which they could distinguish houses of stone that appeared white and lofty at a distance. In the warmth of their admiration, they fancied these to be cities adorned with towers and pinnacles; and one of the soldiers happening to remark that this country resembled Spain in appearance, Grijalva, with universal applause, called it *New Spain*, the name which still distinguishes this extensive and opulent province of the Spanish empire in America.[c] They landed in a river which the natives called *Tabasco*, and the fame of their victory at Potonchan having reached this place, the cazique not only received them amicably, but bestowed presents upon them of such value, as confirmed the high ideas which the Spaniards had formed with respect to the wealth and fertility of the country. These ideas were raised still higher by what occurred at the place where they next touched. This was considerably to the west of Tabasco, in the province since known by the name of Guaxaca. There they were received with the

BOOK III.

1518.

June 9. Tabasco.

Guaxaca.

[c] See NOTE XXVII.

BOOK III. 1518. respect paid to superior beings. The people perfumed them as they landed, with incense of gum copal, and presented to them as offerings the choicest delicacies of their country. They were extremely fond of trading with their new visitants, and in six days the Spaniards obtained ornaments of gold, of curious workmanship, to the value of fifteen thousand pesos, in exchange for European toys of small price. The two prisoners whom Cordova had brought from Yucatan, had hitherto served as interpreters; but as they did not understand the language of this country, the Spaniards learned from the natives by signs, that they were subjects of a great monarch called Montezuma, whose dominion extended over that and many other provinces. Leaving this place, with which he had so much reason to be pleased, Grijalva continued his course towards
June 19. the west. He landed on a small island, which he named the Isle of Sacrifices, because there the Spaniards beheld, for the first time, the horrid spectacle of human victims, which the barbarous superstition of the natives offered to their gods. He touched at another small
St. Juan de Ulua. island, which he called St. Juan de Ulua. From this place he dispatched Pedro de Alvarado, one of his officers, to Velasquez, with a full account of the important discoveries which

he had made, and with all the treasure that he had acquired by trafficing with the natives. After the departure of Alvarado, he himself, with the remaining vessels, proceeded along the coast as far as the river Panuco, the country still appearing to be well peopled, fertile, and opulent.

1518.

Several of Grijalva's officers contended, that it was not enough to have discovered those delightful regions, or to have performed, at their different landing-places, the empty ceremony of taking possession of them for the crown of Castile, and that their glory was incomplete, unless they planted a colony in some proper station, which might not only secure the Spanish nation a footing in the country, but, with the reinforcements which they were certain of receiving, might gradually subject the whole to the dominion of their sovereign. But the squadron had now been above five months at sea; the greatest part of their provisions was exhausted, and what remained of their stores so much corrupted by the heat of the climate, as to be almost unfit for use; they had lost some men by death; others were sickly; the country was crowded with people who seemed to be intelligent as well as brave; and they were under the government of one powerful monarch, who could bring them to act against their invaders

Reasons for not leaving a colony there.

BOOK III. 1518.

with united force. To plant a colony under so many circumstances of disadvantage, appeared a scheme too perilous to be attempted. Grijalva, though possessed both of ambition and courage, was destitute of the superior talents capable of forming or executing such a great plan. He judged it more prudent to return to Cuba, having fulfilled the purpose of his voyage, and accomplished all that the armament which he commanded enabled him to perform. He returned to St. Jago de Cuba on the twenty-sixth of October, from which he had taken his departure about six months before.[f]

Preparations for another expedition.

THIS was the longest as well as the most successful voyage which the Spaniards had hitherto made in the New World. They had discovered that Yucatan was not an island as they had supposed, but part of the great continent of America. From Potonchan they had pursued their course for many hundred miles along a coast formerly unexplored, stretching at first towards the west, and then turning to the north; all the country which they had discovered appeared to be no less valuable than extensive. As soon as Alvarado reached Cuba, Velasquez, transported with success so far beyond his most

[f] Herrera, dec. 11. lib. iii. c. 1, 2. 9, 10. Bernal Diaz, c. 8. 17. Oviedo Hist. lib. xvii. c. 9. 20. Gomara, c. 49.

sanguine expectations, immediately dispatched a person of confidence to carry this important intelligence to Spain, to exhibit the rich productions of the countries which had been discovered by his means, and to solicit such an increase of authority as might enable and encourage him to attempt the conquest of them. Without waiting for the return of his messenger, or for the arrival of Grijalva, of whom he was become so jealous or distrustful that he was resolved no longer to employ him, he began to prepare such a powerful armament, as might prove equal to an enterprise of so much danger and importance. 1518.

But as the expedition upon which Velasquez was now intent, terminated in conquests of greater moment than what the Spaniards had hitherto achieved, and led them to the knowledge of a people, who, if compared with those tribes of America with whom they were hitherto acquainted, may be considered as highly civilised; it is proper to pause before we proceed to the history of events extremely different from those which we have already related, in order to take a view of the state of the New World when first discovered, and to contemplate the policy and manners of the rude uncultivated tribes that occupied all the parts of it with which the Spaniards were at this time acquainted.

NOTES

AND

ILLUSTRATIONS.

NOTE I. p. 9.

TYRE was situated at such a distance from the Arabian Gulf, or Red Sea, as made it impracticable to convey commodities from thence to that city by land-carriage. This induced the Phenicians to render themselves masters of *Rhinocrura* or *Rhinocolura*, the nearest port in the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. They landed the cargoes which they purchased in Arabia, Ethiopia, and India, at Elath, the safest harbour in the Red Sea towards the North. Thence they were carried by land to Rhinocolura, the distance not being very considerable; and, being re-shipped in that port, were transported to Tyre, and distributed over the world. Strabon. Geogr. Edit. Casaub. lib. xvi. p. 1128. Diodor. Sicul. Biblioth. Histor. Edit. Wesselingi, lib. i. p. 70.

NOTE II. p. 14.

THE Periplus Hannonis is the only authentic monument of the Carthaginian skill in naval affairs, and

one of the most curious fragments transmitted to us by antiquity. The learned and industrious Mr. Dodwell, in a dissertation prefixed to the Periplus of Hanno, in the edition of the Minor Geographers published at Oxford, endeavours to prove that this is a spurious work, the composition of some Greek, who assumed Hanno's name. But M. de Montesquieu, in his l'Esprit des Loix, lib. xxi. c. 8. and M. de Bougainville, in a dissertation published, tom. xxvi. of the Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, &c. have established its authenticity by arguments which to me appear unanswerable. Ramusio has accompanied his translation of this curious voyage with a dissertation tending to illustrate it. Racolte de Viaggi, vol. i. p. 112. M. de Bougainville has, with great learning and ability, treated the same subject. It appears that Hanno, according to the mode of ancient navigation, undertook this voyage in small vessels, so constructed, that he could keep close in with the coast. He sailed from Gades to the island of Cerne in twelve days. This is probably what is known to the moderns by the name of the isle of Arguim. It became the chief station of the Carthaginians on that coast; and M. de Bougainville contends, that the cisterns found there are monuments of the Carthaginian power and ingenuity. Proceeding from Cerne, and still following the winding of the coast, he arrived, in seventeen days, at a promontory, which he called *The West Horn*, probably Cape Palmas. From this he advanced to another promontory, which he named *The South Horn*, and which is manifestly Cape de Tres Puntas, about five degrees north of the line. All the circumstances contained in the short abstract of his journal, which is handed

down to us concerning the appearance and state of the countries on the coast of Africa, are confirmed and illustrated by a comparison with the accounts of modern navigators. Even those circumstances which, from their seeming improbability, have been produced to invalidate the credibility of his relation, tend to confirm it. He observes, that in the country to the south of Cerne, a profound silence reigned through the day; but during the night innumerable fires were kindled along the banks of the rivers, and the air resounded with the noise of pipes and drums, and cries of joy. The same thing, as Ramusio observes, still takes place. The excessive heat obliges the negroes to take shelter in the woods, or in their houses, during the day. As soon as the sun sets, they sally out, and by torch-light enjoy the pleasure of music and dancing, in which they spend the night. Ramus. i. 113. F. In another place, he mentions the sea as burning with torrents of fire. What occurred to M. Adanson, on the same coast, may explain this: "As soon," says he, "as the sun dipped beneath the horizon, and night overspread the earth with darkness, the sea lent us its friendly light. While the prow of our vessel ploughed the foaming surges, it seem to set them all on fire. Thus we sailed in a luminous inclosure, which surrounded us like a large circle of rays, from whence darted in the wake of the ship a long stream of a light." Voy. to Senegal, p. 176. This appearance of the sea observed by Hunter, has been mentioned as an argument against the authenticity of the Periplus. It is, however, a phenomenon very common in warm climates. Captain Cook's Second Voyage, vol. i. p. 15. The Periplus of Hanno has been translated, and every

point with respect to it has been illustrated with much learning and ingenuity, in a work published by Don Pedr. Rodrig. Campomanes, intitled, Antiguedad maritima de Cartago, con el Periplo de su General Hannon traducido è illustrado. Mad. 1756. 4°.

NOTE III. p. 15.

Long after the navigation of the Phenicians and of Eudoxus round Africa, Polybius, the most intelligent and best informed historian of antiquity, and particularly distinguished by his attention to geographical researches, affirms, that it was not known, in his time, whether Africa was a continued continent, stretching to the south, or whether it was encompassed by the sea. Polybii Hist. lib. iii. Pliny the naturalist asserts, that there can be no communication between the southern and northern temperate zones. Plinii Hist. Natur. Edit. in usum Delph. 4to. lib. ii. c. 68. If they had given full credit to the accounts of those voyages, the former could not have entertained such a doubt, the latter could not have delivered such an opinion. Strabo mentions the voyage of Eudoxus, but treats it as a fabulous tale, lib. ii. p. 155.; and, according to his account of it, no other judgment can be formed with respect to it. Strabo seems not to have known any thing with certainty concerning the form and state of the southern parts of Africa. Geogr. lib. xvii. p. 1180. Ptolemy, the most inquisitive and learned of all the ancient geographers, was equally unacquainted with any parts of Africa situated a few degrees beyond the equinoctial line; for he supposes that this great continent was not surrounded by the sea, but that it stretched, without

interruption, towards the south pole; and he so far mistakes its true figure, that he describes the continent as becoming broader and broader as it advanced towards the south. Ptolemæi Geogr. lib. iv. c. 9. Brietii Parallela Geogr. veteris et novæ, p. 86.

NOTE IV. p. 23.

A FACT, recorded by Strabo, affords a very strong and singular proof of the ignorance of the ancients with respect to the situation of the various parts of the earth. When Alexander marched along the banks of the Hydaspes and Acesine, two of the rivers which fall into the Indus, he observed that there were many crocodiles in those rivers, and that the country produced beans of the same species with those which were common in Egypt. From these circumstances, he concluded that he had discovered the source of the Nile, and prepared a fleet to sail down the Hydaspes to Egypt. Strab. Geogr. lib. XV. p. 1020. This amazing error did not arise from any ignorance of geography peculiar to that monarch; for we are informed by Strabo, that Alexander applied with particular attention in order to acquire the knowledge of this science, and had accurate maps or descriptions of the countries through which he marched. Lib. ii. p. 120. But in his age the knowledge of the Greeks did not extend beyond the limits of the Mediterranean.

NOTE V. p. 24.

As the flux and reflux of the sea is remarkably great at the mouth of the river Indus, this would render the

phenomenon more formidable to the Greeks. Varen. Geogr. vol. i. p. 251.

NOTE VI. p. 28.

It is probable that the ancients were seldom induced to advance so far as the mouth of the Ganges, either by motives of curiosity, or views of commercial advantage. In consequence of this, their idea concerning the position of that great river was very erroneous. Ptolemy places that branch of the Ganges, which he distinguishes by the name of the Great Mouth, in the hundred and forty-sixth degree of longitude from his first meridian in the Fortunate Islands. But its true longitude, computed from that meridian, is now determined, by astronomical observations, to be only a hundred and five degrees. A geographer so eminent must have been betrayed into an error of this magnitude by the imperfection of the information which he had received concerning those distant regions; and this affords a striking proof of the intercourse with them being extremely rare. With respect to the countries of India beyond the Ganges, his intelligence was still more defective, and his errors more enormous. I shall have occasion to observe, in another place, that he has placed the country of the Seres, or China, no less than sixty degrees farther east than its true position. M. d'Anville, one of the most learned and intelligent of the modern geographers, has set this matter in a clear light, in two dissertations published in Mem. de l'Academ. des Inscript. &c. tom. xxxii. p. 573. 604.

NOTE VII. p. 29.

It is remarkable, that the discoveries of the ancients were made chiefly by land; those of the moderns are carried on chiefly by sea. The progress of conquest led to the former, that of commerce to the latter. It is a judicious observation of Strabo, that the conquests of Alexander the Great made known the East, those of the Romans opened the West, and those of Mithridates King of Pontus the North. Lib. i. p. 26. When discovery is carried on by land alone, its progress must be slow and its operations confined. When it is carried on only by sea, its sphere may be more extensive, and its advances more rapid; but it labours under peculiar defects. Though it may make known the position of different countries, and ascertain their boundaries as far as these are determined by the ocean, it leaves us in ignorance with respect to their interior state. Above two centuries and a half have elapsed since the Europeans sailed round the southern promontory of Africa, and have traded in most of its ports; but, in a considerable part of that great continent, they have done little more than survey its coasts, and mark its capes and harbours. Its interior regions are in a great measure unknown. The ancients, who had a very imperfect knowledge of its coasts, except where they are washed by the Mediterranean or Red Sea, were accustomed to penetrate into its inland provinces, and, if we may rely on the testimony of Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, had explored many parts of it now altogether unknown. Unless both

modes of discovery be united, the geographical knowledge of the earth must remain incomplete and inaccurate.

NOTE VIII. p. 34.

THE notion of the ancients concerning such an excessive degree of heat in the torrid zone, as rendered it unhabitable, and their persisting in this error long after they began to have some commercial intercourse with several parts of India lying within the tropics, must appear so singular and absurd, that it may not be unacceptable to some of my readers to produce evidence of their holding this opinion, and to account for the apparent inconsistence of their theory with their experience. Cicero, who had bestowed attention upon every part of philosophy known to the ancients, seems to have believed that the torrid zone was uninhabitable, and, of consequence, that there could be no intercourse between the northern and southern temperate zones. He introduces Africanus thus addressing the younger Scipio: "You see this earth encompassed, and as it were bound in by certain zones, of which two, at the greatest distance from each other, and sustaining the opposite poles of heaven, are frozen with perpetual cold; the middle one, and the largest of all, is burnt with the heat of the sun; two are habitable, the people in the southern one are antipodes to us, with whom we have no connection." *Somnium Scipionis*, c. 6. Geminus, a Greek philosopher, contemporary with Cicero, delivers the same doctrine, not in a popular work, but in his Εισαγωγη εις φαινομενα,

a treatise purely scientific. "When we speak," says he, "of the southern temperate zone, and its inhabitants, and concerning those who are called antipodes, it must be always understood, that we have no certain knowledge or information concerning the southern temperate zone, whether it be inhabited or not. But from the spherical figure of the earth, and the course which the sun holds between the tropics, we conclude that there is another zone situated to the south, which enjoys the same degree of temperature with the northern one which we inhabit." Cap. xiii. p. 31. ap. Petavii Opus de Doctr. Tempor. in quo Uranologium sive Systemata var. Auctorum. Amst. 1705. vol. iii. The opinion of Pliny the naturalist, with respect to both these points, was the same: "There are five divisions of the earth, which are called zones. All that portion which lies near to the two opposite poles is oppressed with vehement cold and eternal frost. There, unblest with the aspect of milder stars, perpetual darkness reigns, or at the utmost a feeble light reflected from surrounding snows. The middle of the earth, in which is the orbit of the sun, is scorched and burnt up with flames and fiery vapour. Between these torrid and frozen districts lie two other portions of the earth, which are temperate; but, on account of the burning region interposed, there can be no communication between them. Thus Heaven has deprived us of three parts of the earth." Lib. ii. c. 68. Strabo delivers his opinion to the same effect, in terms no less explicit: "The portion of the earth which lies near the equator, in the torrid zone, is rendered uninhabitable by heat." Lib. ii. p. 154. To these I might add the authority

of many other respectable philosophers and historians of antiquity.

In order to explain the sense in which this doctrine was generally received, we may observe, that Parmenides, as we are informed by Strabo, was the first who divided the earth into five zones, and he extended the limits of the zone which he supposed to be uninhabitable on account of heat, beyond the tropics. Aristotle, as we learn likewise from Strabo, fixed the boundaries of the different zones in the same manner as they are defined by modern geographers. But the progress of discovery having gradually demonstrated that several regions of the earth which lay within the tropics were not only habitable, but populous and fertile, this induced later geographers to circumscribe the limits of the torrid zone. It is not easy to ascertain with precision the boundaries which they allotted to it. From a passage in Strabo, who, as far as I know, is the only author of antiquity from whom we receive any hint concerning this subject, I should conjecture, that those who calculated according to the measurement of the earth by Eratosthenes, supposed the torrid zone to comprehend near sixteen degrees, about eight on each side of the equator; whereas such as followed the computation of Posidonius allotted about twenty-four degrees, or somewhat more than twelve degrees on each side of the equator, to the torrid zone. Strabo, lib. ii. p. 151. According to the former opinion, about two-thirds of that portion of the earth which lies between the tropics was considered as habitable; according to the latter,

about one half of it. With this restriction, the doctrine of the ancients concerning the torrid zone appears less absurd; and we can conceive the reason of their asserting this zone to be uninhabitable, even after they had opened a communication with several places within the tropics. When men of science spoke of the torrid zone, they considered it as it was limited by the definition of geographers to sixteen, or at the utmost to twenty-four degrees; and as they knew almost nothing of the countries nearer to the equator, they might still suppose them to be uninhabitable. In loose and popular discourse, the name of the torrid zone continued to be given to all that portion of the earth which lies within the tropics. Cicero seems to have been unacquainted with those ideas of the later geographers; and, adhering to the division of Parmenides, describes the torrid zone as the largest of the five. Some of the ancients rejected the notion concerning the intolerable heat of the torrid zone as a popular error. This we are told by Plutarch, was the sentiment of Pythagoras, and we learn from Strabo, that Eratosthenes and Polybius had adopted the same opinion, lib. ii. p. 154. Ptolemy seems to have paid no regard to the ancient doctrine and opinions concerning the torrid zone.

NOTE IX. p. 59.

THE court of inquisition, which effectually checks a spirit of liberal inquiry, and of literary improvement, wherever it is established, was unknown in Portugal in the fifteenth century, when the people of that

kingdom began their voyages of discovery. More than a century elapsed, before it was introduced by John III., whose reign commenced A. D. 1521.

NOTE X. p. 70.

An instance of this is related by Hackluyt, upon the authority of the Portuguese historian Garcia de Resende. Some English merchants having resolved to open a trade with the coast of Guinea, John II. of Portugal dispatched ambassadors to Edward IV., in order to lay before him the right which he had acquired by the Pope's bull to the dominion of that country, and to request of him to prohibit his subjects to prosecute their intended voyage. Edward was so much satisfied with the exclusive title of the Portuguese, that he issued his orders in the terms which they desired. Hackluyt, Navigations, Voyages, and Traffics of the English, vol. ii. part ii. p. 2.

NOTE XI. p. 83.

The time of Columbus's death may be nearly ascertained by the following circumstances. It appears from the fragment of a letter, addressed by him to Ferdinand and Isabella, A. D. 1501, that he had, at that time, been engaged forty years in a sea-faring life. In another letter, he informs them, that he went to sea at the age of fourteen; from those facts it follows, that he was born A. D. 1447. Life of Christo. Columbus, by his son Don Ferdinand. Churchill's Collection of Voyages, vol. ii. p. 484, 485.

NOTE XII. p. 92.

THE spherical figure of the earth was known to the ancient geographers. They invented the method, still in use, of computing the longitude and latitude of different places. According to their doctrine, the equator, or imaginary line which encompasses the earth, contained three hundred and sixty degrees; these they divided into twenty-four parts, or hours, each equal to fifteen degrees. The country of the *Seres*, or *Sinæ*, being the farthest part of India known to the ancients, was supposed by Marinus Tyrius, the most eminent of the ancient geographers before Ptolemy, to be fifteen hours, or two hundred and twenty-five degrees to the east of the first meridian, passing through the Fortunate Islands. Ptolemæi Geogr. lib. i. c. 11. If this supposition was well-founded, the country of the Seres, or China, was only nine hours, or one hundred and thirty-five degrees west from the Fortunate or Canary Islands; and the navigation in that direction was much shorter than by the course which the Portuguese were pursuing. Marco Polo, in his travels, had described countries, particularly the island of Cipango or Zipangri, supposed to be Japan, considerably to the east of any part of Asia known to the ancients. Marcus Paulus de Region. Oriental. lib. ii. c. 70. lib. iii. c. 2. Of course, this country, as it extended further to the east, was still nearer to the Canary Islands. The conclusions of Columbus, though drawn from inaccurate observations, were just. If the suppositions of Marinus had been well-founded, and if the countries,

which Marco Polo visited, had been situated to the east of those whose longitude Marinus had ascertained, the proper and nearest course to the East-Indies must have been to steer directly west. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 2. A more extensive knowledge of the globe has now discovered the great error of Marinus, in supposing China to be fifteen hours, or two hundred and twenty-five degrees east from the Canary Islands; and that even Ptolemy was mistaken, when he reduced the longitude of China to twelve hours, or one hundred and eighty degrees. The longitude of the western frontier of that vast empire is seven hours, or one hundred and fifteen degrees from the meridian of the Canary Islands. But Columbus followed the light which his age afforded, and relied upon the authority of writers, who were, at that time, regarded as the instructors and guides of mankind in the science of geography.

NOTE XIII. p. 121.

As the Portuguese, in making their discoveries, did not depart far from the coast of Africa, they concluded that birds, whose flight they observed with great attention, did not venture to any considerable distance from land. In the infancy of navigation, it was not known, that birds often stretched their flight to an immense distance from any shore. In sailing towards the West-Indian islands, birds are often seen at the distance of two hundred leagues from the nearest coast. Sloane's Nat. Hist. of Jamaica, vol. i. p. 30. Catesby saw an owl at sea, when the ship was six hundred leagues distant from land. Nat. Hist. of Carolina, pref. p. 7.

Hist. Naturelle de M. Buffon, tom. xvi. p. 32. From which it appears, that this indication of land, on which Columbus seems to have relied with some confidence, was extremely uncertain. This observation is confirmed by Capt. Cook, the most extensive and experienced navigator of any age or nation. "No one yet knows (says he) to what distance any of the oceanic birds go to sea; for my own part, I do not believe that there is one in the whole tribe that can be relied on in pointing out the vicinity of land." Voyage towards the South Pole, vol. i. p. 275.

NOTE XIV. p. 135.

In a letter of the Admiral's to Ferdinand and Isabella, he describes one of the harbours in Cuba, with all the enthusiastic admiration of a discoverer. — "I discovered a river which a galley might easily enter: the beauty of it induced me to sound, and I found from five to eight fathoms of water. Having proceeded a considerable way up the river, every thing invited me to settle there. The beauty of the river, the clearness of the water through which I could see the sandy bottom, the multitude of palm trees of different kinds, the tallest and finest I had seen, and an infinite number of other large and flourishing trees, the birds, and the verdure of the plains are so wonderfully beautiful, that this country excels all others as far as the day surpasses the night in brightness and splendour, so that I often said, that it would be in vain for me to attempt to give Your Highnesses a full account of it, for neither my tongue nor my pen could come up to the truth;

and indeed I am so much amazed at the sight of such beauty, that I know not how to describe it." Life of Columb. c. 30.

NOTE XV. p. 141.

THE account which Columbus gives of the humanity and orderly behaviour of the natives on this occasion is very striking. "The King (says he, in a letter to Ferdinand and Isabella) having been informed of our misfortune, expressed great grief for our loss, and immediately sent aboard all the people in the place in many large canoes; we soon unloaded the ship of every thing that was upon deck, as the King gave us great assistance: he himself, with his brothers and relations, took all possible care that every thing should be properly done, both aboard and on shore. And, from time to time, he sent some of his relations weeping, to beg of me not to be dejected, for he would give me all that he had. I can assure Your Highnesses, that so much care would not have been taken in securing our effects in any part of Spain, as all our property was put together in one place near his palace, until the houses which he wanted to prepare for the custody of it, were emptied. He immediately placed a guard of armed men, who watched during the whole night, and those on shore lamented as if they had been much interested in our loss. The people are so affectionate, so tractable, and so peaceable, that I swear to Your Highnesses, that there is not a better race of men, nor a better country in the world. They love their neighbour as themselves;

their conversation is the sweetest and mildest in the world, cheerful, and always accompanied with a smile. And although it is true that they go naked, yet Your Highnesses may be assured that they have many very commendable customs; the King is served with great state, and his behaviour is so decent, that it is pleasant to see him, as it is likewise to observe the wonderful memory which these people have, and their desire of knowing every thing, which leads them to inquire into its causes and effects." Life of Columbus, c. 32. It is probable, that the Spaniards were indebted for this officious attention, to the opinion which the Indians entertained of them as a superior order of beings.

NOTE XVI. p. 149.

EVERY monument of such a man as Columbus is valuable. A letter which he wrote to Ferdinand and Isabella, describing what passed on this occasion, exhibits a most striking picture of his intrepidity, his humanity, his prudence, his public spirit, and courtly address. "I would have been less concerned for this misfortune, had I alone been in danger, both because my life is a debt that I owe to the Supreme Creator, and because I have at other times been exposed to the most imminent hazard. But what gave me infinite grief and vexation was, that after it had pleased our Lord to give me faith to undertake this enterprise, in which I had now been so successful, that my opponents would have been convinced, and the glory of Your Highnesses, and the extent of your territory, increased by me; it should please the Divine Majesty to stop all by my death. All this would have been more tolerable,

had it not been attended with the loss of those men whom I had carried with me, upon promise of the greatest prosperity, who, seeing themselves in such distress, cursed not only their coming along with me, but that fear and awe of me, which prevented them from returning, as they often had resolved to have done. But besides all this, my sorrow was greatly increased by recollecting that I had left my two sons at school at Cordova, destitute of friends, in a foreign country, when it could not in all probability be known that I had done such services as might induce Your Highnesses to remember them. And though I comforted myself with the faith that our Lord would not permit that, which tended so much to the glory of his Church, and which I had brought about with so much trouble, to remain imperfect, yet I considered, that, on account of my sins, it was his will to deprive me of that glory, which I might have attained in *this world.* While in this confused state, I thought on the good fortune which accompanies Your Highnesses, and imagined that although I should perish, and the vessel be lost, it was possible that you might somehow come to the knowledge of my voyage, and the success with which it was attended. For that reason I wrote upon parchment with the brevity which the situation required, that I had discovered the lands which I promised, in how many days I had done it, and what course I had followed. I mentioned the goodness of the country, the character of the inhabitants, and that Your Highnesses' subjects were left in possession of all that I had discovered. Having sealed this writing, I addressed it to Your Highnesses, and promised a thousand ducats to any person who should deliver it sealed, so that if any

foreigner found it, the promised reward might prevail on them not to give the information to another. I then caused a great cask to be brought to me, and wrapping up the parchment in an oiled cloth, and afterwards in a cake of wax, I put it into the cask, and having stopped it well, I cast it into the sea. All the men believed that it was some act of devotion. Imagining that this might never chance to be taken up, as the ships approached nearer to Spain, I made another packet like the first, and placed it at the top of the poop, so that if the ship sunk, the cask remaining above water might be committed to the guidance of fortune."

NOTE XVII. p. 154.

SOME Spanish authors, with the meanness of national jealousy, have endeavoured to detract from the glory of Columbus, by insinuating that he was led to the discovery of the New World, not by his own inventive or enterprising genius, but by information which he had received. According to their account, a vessel having been driven from its course by easterly winds, was carried before them far to the west, and landed on the coast of an unknown country, from which it returned with difficulty; the pilot, and three sailors, being the only persons who survived the distresses which the crew suffered, from want of provisions, and fatigue in this long voyage. In a few days after their arrival, all the four died; but the pilot having been received into the house of Columbus, his intimate friend disclosed to him, before his death,

the secret of the discovery which he had accidentally made, and left him his papers containing a journal of the voyage, which served as a guide to Columbus in his undertaking. Gomara, as far as I know, is the first author who published this story, Hist. c. 13. Every circumstance is destitute of evidence to support it. Neither the name of the vessel nor its destination is known. Some pretend that it belonged to one of the sea-port towns in Andalusia, and was sailing either to the Canaries, or to Madeira; others, that it was a Biscayner in its way to England; others, a Portuguese ship trading on the coast of Guinea. The name of the pilot is alike unknown, as well as that of the port in which he landed on his return. According to some, it was in Portugal; according to others, in Madeira, or the Azores. The year in which this voyage was made is no less uncertain. Monson's Nav. Tracts. Churchill, iii. 371. No mention is made of this pilot, or his discoveries, by And. Bernaldes, or Pet. Martyr, the contemporaries of Columbus. Herrera, with his usual judgment, passes over it in silence. Oviedo takes notice of this report, but considers it as a tale fit only to amuse the vulgar. Hist. lib. ii. c. 2. As Columbus held his course directly west from the Canaries, and never varied it, some later authors have supposed, that this uniformity is a proof of his being guided by some previous information. But they do not recollect the principles on which he founded all his hopes of success, that by holding a westerly course, he must certainly arrive at those regions of the east described by the ancients. His firm belief of his own system led him to take that course, and to pursue it without deviation.

THE Spaniards are not the only people who have called in question Columbus's claim to the honour of having discovered America. Some Germans authors ascribed this honour to Martin Behaim, their countryman. He was of the noble family of the Behaims of Schwartzbach, citizens of the first rank in the Imperial town of Nuremberg. Having studied under the celebrated John Muller, better known by the name of Regiomontanus, he acquired such knowledge of cosmography, as excited a desire of exploring those regions, the situation and qualities of which he had been accustomed, under that able master, to investigate and describe. Under the patronage of the Duchess of Burgundy he repaired to Lisbon, whither the fame of the Portuguese discoveries invited all the adventurous spirits of the age. There, as we learn from Herman Schedel, of whose *Chronicon Mundi* a German translation was printed at Nuremberg, A. D. 1493, his merit as a cosmographer raised him, in conjunction with Diego Cano, to the command of a squadron fitted out for discovery in the year 1483. In that voyage, he is said to have discovered the kingdom of Congo. He settled in the island of Fayal, one of the Azores, and was a particular friend of Columbus. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 2. Magellan had a terrestrial globe made by Behaim, on which he demonstrated the course that he proposed to hold in search of the communication with the South Sea, which he afterwards discovered. Gomara Hist. c. 19. Herrera, dec. 11. lib. ii. c. 19. In the year 1492, Behaim visited his relations in Nuremberg, and left with them a map drawn with his own hand, which is still preserved among the archives of the family. Thus far the story of Martin Behaim seems to be well authenticated; but the ac-

count of his having discovered any part of the New World appears to be merely conjectural.

In the first edition, as I had at that time hardly any knowledge of Behaim but what I derived from a frivolous dissertation 'De vero Novi Orbis Inventore,' published at Francfort, A. D. 1714, by Jo. Frid. Stuvenius, I was induced, by the authority of Herrera, to suppose that Behaim was not a native of Germany; but from more full and accurate information, communicated to me by the learned Dr. John Reinold Forster, I am now satisfied that I was mistaken. Dr. Forster has been likewise so good as to favour me with a copy of Behaim's map, as published by Doppelmayer in his account of the Mathematicians and Artists of Nuremberg. From this map, the imperfection of cosmographical knowledge at that period is manifest. Hardly one place is laid down in its true situation. Nor can I discover from it any reason to suppose that Behaim had the least knowledge of any region in America. He delineates, indeed, an island to which he gives the name of St. Brandon. This, it is imagined, may be some part of Guiana, supposed at first to be an island. He places it in the same latitude with the Cape Verd isles, and I suspect it to be an imaginary island which has been admitted into some ancient maps on no better authority than the legend of the Irish St. Brandon or Brendan, whose story is so childishly fabulous as to be unworthy of any notice. Girald. Cambriensis ap. Missingham Florilegium Sanctorum, p. 427.

The pretensions of the Welsh to the discovery of America seem not to rest on a foundation much more

solid. In the twelfth century, according to Powell, a dispute having arisen among the sons of Owen Guyneth, King of North-Wales, concerning the succession to his crown, Madoc, one of their number, weary of this contention, betook himself to sea in quest of a more quiet settlement. He steered due west, leaving Ireland to the north, and arrived in an unknown country, which appeared to him so desirable, that he returned to Wales, and carried thither several of his adherents and companions. This is said to have happened about the year 1170, and after that, he and his colony were heard of no more. But it is to be observed, that Powell, on whose testimony the authenticity of this story rests, published his history above four centuries from the date of the event which he relates. Among a people as rude and as illiterate as the Welsh at that period, the memory of a transaction so remote must have been very imperfectly preserved, and would require to be confirmed by some author of greater credit, and nearer to the æra of Madoc's voyage than Powell. Later antiquaries have indeed appealed to the testimony of Meredith ap Rees, a Welsh bard, who died A. D. 1477. But he, too, lived at such a distance of time from the event, that he cannot be considered as a witness of much more credit than Powell. Besides, his verses, published by Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 1., convey no information, but that Madoc, dissatisfied with his domestic situation, employed himself in searching the ocean for new possessions. But even if we admit the authenticity of Powell's story, it does not follow that the unknown country which Madoc discovered by steering west, in such a course as to leave Ireland to the north, was any part

of America. The naval skill of the Welsh in the twelfth century was hardly equal to such a voyage. If he made any discovery at all, it is more probable that it was Madeira, or some other of the western isles. The affinity of the Welsh language with some dialects spoken in America, has been mentioned as a circumstance which confirms the truth of Madoc's voyage. But that affinity has been observed in so few instances, and in some of these is so obscure, or so fanciful, that no conclusion can be drawn from the casual resemblance of a small number of words. There is a bird, which, as far as is yet known, is found only on the coasts of South-America, from Port Desire to the Straits of Magellan. It is distinguished by the name of *Penguin*. This word in the Welsh language signifies *White-head*. Almost all the authors who favour the pretensions of the Welsh to the discovery of America, mention this as an irrefragable proof of the affinity of the Welsh language with that spoken in this region of America. But Mr. Pennant, who has given a scientific description of the Penguin, observes, that all the birds of this genus have black heads, "so that we must resign every hope (adds he) founded on this hypothesis of retrieving the Cambrian race in the New World." Philos. Transact. vol. lviii. p. 91, &c. Besides this, if the Welsh, towards the close of the twelfth century, had settled in any part of America, some remains of the Christian doctrine and rites must have been found among their descendants, when they were discovered about three hundred years posterior to their migration; a period so short, that, in the course of it, we cannot well suppose that all European ideas and arts would be totally forgotten. Lord Lyttelton, in his notes to the

fifth book of his History of Henry II., p. 371., has examined what Powell relates concerning the discoveries made by Madoc, and invalidates the truth of his story by other arguments of great weight.

THE pretensions of the Norwegians to the discovery of America seem to be better founded than those of the Germans or Welsh. The inhabitants of Scandinavia were remarkable in the middle ages for the boldness and extent of their maritime excursions. In 874, the Norwegians discovered, and planted a colony in Iceland. In 982, they discovered Greenland, and established settlements there. From that, some of their navigators proceeded towards the west, and discovered a country more inviting than those horrid regions with which they were acquainted. According to their representation, this country was sandy on the coasts, but in the interior parts level and covered with wood, on which account they gave it the name of *Helle-land*, and *Mark-land*, and having afterwards found some plants of the vine which bore grapes, they called it *Win-land*. The credit of this story rests, as far as I know, on the authority of the *saga*, or chronicle of King Olaus, composed by Snorro Sturlonides, or *Sturlusons*, published by Perinskiold, at Stockholm, A. D. 1697. As Snorro was born in the year 1179, his chronicle might be compiled about two centuries after the event which he relates. His account of the navigation and discoveries of *Biorn*, and his companion *Lief*, is a very rude confused tale, p. 104. 110. 326. It is impossible to discover from him what part of America it was in which the Norwegians landed. According to his account of the

length of the days and nights, it must have been as far north as the fifty-eighth degree of latitude, on some part of the coast of Labradore, approaching near to the entry of Hudson's Straits. Grapes, certainly, are not the production of that country. Torfeus supposes that there is an error in the text, by rectifying of which the place where the Norwegians landed may be supposed to be situated in latitude 49°. But neither is that the region of the vine in America. From perusing Snorro's tale, I should think that the situation of Newfoundland corresponds best with that of the country discovered by the Norwegians. Grapes, however, are not the production of that barren island. Other conjectures are mentioned by M. Mallet, Introd. à l'Hist. de Dennem. 175, &c. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the literature of the north to examine them. It seems manifest, that if the Norwegians did discover any part of America at that period, their attempts to plant colonies proved unsuccessful, and all knowledge of it was soon lost.

NOTE XVIII. p. 156.

Peter Martyr, ab Angleria, a Milanese gentleman, residing at that time in the court of Spain, whose letters contain an account of the transactions of that period, in the order wherein they occurred, describes the sentiments with which he himself and his learned correspondents were affected, in very striking terms. "Præ lætitia prosiluisse te, vixque a lachrymis præ gaudio temperasse, quando literas adspexisti meas quibus, de antipodum orbe latenti hactenus, te certiorem feci, mi suavissime Pomponi, insinuasti. Ex tuis ipse literis

colligo, quid senseris. Sensisti autem, tantique rem fecisti, quanti virum summa doctrina insignitum decuit. Quis namque cibus sublimibus præstari potest ingeniis, isto suavior? quod condimentum gratius? A me facio conjecturam. Beati sentio spiritus meos, quando accitos alloquor prudentes aliquos ex his qui ab ea redeunt provincia. Implicent animos pecuniarum cumulis augendis miseri avari, libidinibus obscœni; nostras nos mentes, postquam Deo pleni aliquando fuerimus, contemplando, hujuscemodi rerum notitia demulciamus." Epist. 152. Pomponio Læto.

NOTE XIX. p. 172.

So firmly were men of science, in that age, persuaded that the countries which Columbus had discovered were connected with the East-Indies, that Benaldes, the Cura de los Palacios, who seems to have been no inconsiderable proficient in the knowledge of cosmography, contends that Cuba was not an island, but a part of the continent, and united to the dominions of the Great Khan. This he delivered as his opinion to Columbus himself, who was his guest for some time on his return from his second voyage; and he supports it by several arguments, mostly founded on the authority of Sir John Mandeville. MS. *penes me.* Antonio Gallo, who was secretary to the magistracy of Genoa towards the close of the fifteenth century, published a short account of the navigations and discoveries of his countryman Columbus, annexed to his Opuscula Historica de Rebus Populi Genuensis; in which he informs us, from letters of Columbus which he himself had seen, that it was his opinion, founded

upon nautical observations, that one of t s islands he had discovered was distant only two hours or thirty degrees from Cattigara, which, in the charts of the geographers of that age, was laid down, upon the authority of Ptolemy, lib. vii. c. 3., as the most easterly place in Asia. From this he concluded, that if some unknown continent did not obstruct the navigation, there must be a short and easy access, by holding a westerly course, to this entreme region of the East. Muratori Scriptores Rer. Italicarum, vol. xxiii. p. 304.

NOTE XX. p. 179.

Bernaldes, the *Cura* or Rector de los Palacios, a contemporary writer, says, that five hundred of these captives were sent to Spain, and sold publicly in Seville as slaves; but that, by the change of climate and their inability to bear the fatigue of labour, they all died in a short time. MS. *penes me*.

NOTE XXI. p. 196.

Columbus seems to have formed some very singular opinions concerning the countries which he had now discovered. The violent swell and agitation of the waters on the coast of Trinidad led him to conclude this to be the highest part of the terraqueous globe, and he imagined that various circumstances concurred in proving that the sea was here visibly elevated. Having adopted this erroneous principle, the apparent beauty of the country induced him to fall in with a notion of Sir John Mandeville, c. 102., that the

terrestrial paradise was the highest land in the earth; and he believed that he had been so fortunate as to discover this happy abode. Nor ought we to think it strange that a person of so much sagacity should be influenced by the opinion or reports of such a fabulous author as Mandeville. Columbus and the other discoverers were obliged to follow such guides as they could find; and it appears from several passages in the manuscript of Andr. Bernaldes, the friend of Columbus, that no inconsiderable degree of credit was given to the testimony of Mandeville in that age. Bernaldes frequently quotes him, and always with respect.

NOTE XXII. p. 211.

It is remarkable that neither Gomara nor Oviedo, the most ancient Spanish historians of America, nor Herrera, consider Ojeda, or his companion Vespucci, as the first discoverers of the continent of America. They uniformly ascribe this honour to Columbus. Some have supposed that national resentment against Vespucci, for deserting the service of Spain, and entering into that of Portugal, may have prompted these writers to conceal the actions which he performed. But Martyr and Benzoni, both Italians, could not be warped by the same prejudice. Martyr was a contemporary author; he resided in the court of Spain, and had the best opportunity to be exactly informed with respect to all public transactions; and yet neither in his Decads, the first general history published of the New World, nor in his Epistles, which contain an account of all the remarkable events

of his time, does he ascribe to Vespucci the honour of having first discovered the continent. Benzoni went as an adventurer to America in the year 1541, and resided there a considerable time. He appears to have been animated with a warm zeal for the honour of Italy, his native country, and yet does not mention the exploits and discoveries of Vespucci. Herrera, who compiled his general history of America from the most authentic records, not only follows those early writers, but accuses Vespucci of falsifying the dates of both the voyages which he made to the New World, and of confounding the one with the other, in order that he might arrogate to himself the glory of having discovered the continent. Her. dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 2. He asserts, that in a judicial enquiry into this matter by the royal fiscal, it was proved by the testimony of Ojeda himself, that he touched at Hispaniola when returning to Spain from his first voyage; whereas Vespucci gave out that they returned directly to Cadiz from the coast of Paria, and touched at Hispaniola only in their second voyage; and that he had finished the voyage in five months; whereas, according to Vespucci's account, he had employed seventeen months in performing it. Viaggio primo de Am. Vespucci, p. 36. Viag. secundo, p. 45. Herrera gives a more full account of this inquest in another part of his Decads, and to the same effect. Her. dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 5. Columbus was in Hispaniola when Ojeda arrived there, and had by that time come to an agreement with Roldan, who opposed Ojeda's attempt to excite a new insurrection, and, of consequence, his voyage must have been posterior to that of the admiral. Life of Columbus,

c. 84. According to Vespucci's account, he set out on his first voyage May 10th, 1497. Viag. primo, p. 6. At that time Columbus was in the court of Spain preparing for his voyage, and seems to have enjoyed a considerable degree of favour. The affairs of the New World were at this juncture under the direction of Antonio Torres, a friend of Columbus. It is not probable, that at that period a commission would be granted to another person, to anticipate the admiral, by undertaking a voyage which he himself intended to perform. Fonseca, who patronised Ojeda, and granted the licence for his voyage, was not recalled to court, and reinstated in the direction of Indian affairs, until the death of Prince John, which happened September 1497, P. Martyr, Ep. 182., several months posterior to the time at which Vespucci pretends to have set out upon his voyage. A life of Vespucci was published at Florence by the Abate Bandini, A. D. 1745, 4to. It is a work of no merit, written with little judgment, and less candour. He contends for his countryman's title to the discovery of the continent with all the blind zeal of national partiality, but produces no new evidence to support it. We learn from him that Vespucci's account of his voyage was published as early as the year 1510, and probably sooner. Vita di Am. Vesp. p. 52. At what time the name of AMERICA came to be first given to the New World is not certain.

NOTE XXIII. p. 271.

THE form employed on this occasion served as a model to the Spaniards in all their subsequent conquests in America. It is so extraordinary in its nature, and gives us such an idea of the proceedings of the Spaniards, and the principles upon which they founded their right to the extensive dominions which they acquired in the New World, that it well merits the attention of the reader. "I Alonso de Ojeda, servant of the most high and powerful Kings of Castile and Leon, the conquerors of barbarous nations, their messenger and captain, notify to you and declare, in as ample form as I am capable, that God our Lord, who is one and eternal, created the heaven and the earth, and one man and one woman, of whom you and we, and all the men who have been or shall be in the world, are descended. But as it has come to pass through the number of generations during more than five thousand years, that they have been dispersed into different parts of the world, and are divided into various kingdoms and provinces, because one country was not able to contain them, nor could they have found in one the means of subsistence and preservation; therefore God our Lord gave the charge of all those people to one man named St. Peter, whom he constituted the lord and head of all the human race, that all men, in whatever place they are born, or in whatever faith or place they are educated, might yield obedience unto him. He hath subjected the whole world to his jurisdiction, and commanded him to establish his residence in Rome, as the most proper place for the

government of the world. He likewise promised and gave him power to establish his authority in every other part of the world, and to judge and govern all Christians, Moors, Jews, Gentiles, and all other people of whatever sect or faith they may be. To him is given the name of *Pope*, which signifies admirable, great father and guardian, because he is the father and governor of all men. Those who lived in the time of this holy father obeyed and acknowledged him as their Lord and King, and the superior of the universe. The same has been observed with respect to them who, since his time, have been chosen to the pontificate. Thus it now continues, and will continue to the end of the world.

"ONE of these Pontiffs, as lord of the world, hath made a grant of these islands, and of the Tierra Firmè of the ocean sea, to the Catholic Kings of Castile, Don Ferdinand and Donna Isabella, of glorious memory, and their successors, our sovereigns, with all they contain, as is more fully expressed in certain deeds passed upon that occasion, which you may see, if you desire it. Thus His Majesty is King and lord of these islands, and of the continent, in virtue of this donation; and, as King and lord aforesaid, most of the islands to which his title hath been notified, have recognised His Majesty, and now yield obedience and subjection to him as their lord, voluntarily and without resistance; and instantly, as soon as they received information, they obeyed the religious men sent by the King to preach to them, and to instruct them in our holy faith; and all these, of their own free will, without any recompense or gratuity, became Chris-

tians, and continue to be so; and His Majesty having received them graciously under his protection, has commanded that they should be treated in the same manner as his other subjects and vassals. You are bound and obliged to act in the same manner. Therefore I now entreat and require you to consider attentively what I have declared to you; and that you may more perfectly comprehend it, that you take such time as is reasonable, in order that you may acknowledge the Church as the superior and guide of the universe, and likewise the holy father called the Pope, in his own right, and His Majesty by his appointment, as King and sovereign lord of these islands, and of the Tierra Firmè; and that you consent that the aforesaid holy fathers shall declare and preach to you the doctrines above-mentioned. If you do this, you act well, and perform that to which you are bound and obliged; and His Majesty, and I in his name, will receive you with love and kindness, and will leave you, your wives and children, free and exempt from servitude, and in the enjoyment of all you possess, in the same manner as the inhabitants of the islands. Besides this, His Majesty will bestow upon you many privileges, exemptions, and rewards. But if you will not comply, or maliciously delay to obey my injunction, then, with the help of God, I will enter your country by force, I will carry on war against you with the utmost violence, I will subject you to the yoke of obedience to the Church and King, I will take your wives and children, and will make them slaves, and sell or dispose of them according to His Majesty's pleasure; I will seize your goods, and do you all the mischief in my power, as

rebellious subjects, who will not acknowledge or submit to their lawful sovereign. And I protest, that all the bloodshed and calamities which shall follow are to be imputed to you, and not to His Majesty, or to me, or the gentlemen who serve under me; and as I have now made this declaration and requisition unto you, I require the notary here present to grant me a certificate of this, subscribed in proper form." Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 14.

NOTE XXIV. p. 290.

Balboa, in his letter to the King, observes, that of the hundred and ninety men whom he took with him, there were never above eighty fit for service at one time. So much did they suffer from hunger, fatigue, and sickness. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 16. P. Mart. decad. 226.

NOTE XXV. p. 306.

Fonseca, Bishop of Palencia, the principal director of American affairs, had eight hundred Indians in property; the commendator Lope de Conchillos, his chief associate in that department, eleven hundred; and other favourites had considerable numbers. They sent overseers to the islands, and hired out those slaves to the planters. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 14. p. 325.

NOTE XXVI. p. 337.

THOUGH America is more plentifully supplied with water than the other regions of the globe, there is no river or stream of water in Yucatan. This peninsula projects from the continent a hundred leagues, but, where broadest, does not extend above twenty-five leagues. It is an extensive plain, not only without mountains, but almost without any inequality of ground. The inhabitants are supplied with water from pits, and wherever they dig them, find it in abundance. It is probable, from all those circumstances, that this country was formerly covered by the sea. Herreræ Descriptio Indiæ Occidentalis, p. 14. Histoire Naturelle, par M. de Buffon, tom. i. p. 593.

NOTE XXVII. p. 341.

M. CLAVIGERO censures me for having represented the Spaniards who sailed with Cordova and Grijalva, as fancying, in the warmth of their imagination, that they saw cities on the coast of Yucatan adorned with towers and *cupolas*. I know not what translation of my history he has consulted, (for his quotation from it is not taken from the original,) but I never imagined that any building erected by Americans could suggest the idea of a cupola or dome, a structure which their utmost skill in architecture was incapable of rearing. My words are, that they fancied the villages which hey saw from their ships " to be cities adorned with

towers and pinnacles." By *pinnacles* I meant some elevation above the rest of the building; and the passage is translated almost literally from Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iii. c. i. In almost all the accounts of new countries given by the Spanish discoverers in that age, this warmth of admiration is conspicuous; and led them to describe these new objects in the most splendid terms. When Cordova and his companions first beheld an Indian village of greater magnitude than any they had beheld in the islands, they dignified it by the name of *Grand Cairo*, B. Diaz. c. 2. From the same cause Grijalva and his associates thought the country, along the coast of which they held their course, entitled to the name of New Spain.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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